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Fiftieth Session

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6th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 26 September 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President *(interpretation from Spanish):* The first speaker this morning is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, His Excellency Don Javier Solana Madariaga, on whom I now call.

Mr. Solana (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish):* I should like at the outset to convey to you, Sir, my most cordial and sincere congratulations on your election as President of the Assembly. Both Spain, Portugal's sister country, and the European Union, on behalf of which I have the honour to address the Assembly today, are confident that your work will meet with the greatest success. I am firmly convinced that your experience as an eminent professor of international law and your thorough knowledge of international relations will contribute decisively to the Assembly's achieving its ambitious goals.

I should like also to thank Minister Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire for the excellent manner in which he conducted our deliberations during the previous session of the Assembly.

Likewise, I wish to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, together with my congratulations on the work he has accomplished throughout his mandate.

In order to speed up the work of the Assembly, I intend to shorten my statement, the complete text of which will be published in a separate document.

I am addressing this Assembly on behalf of the European Union, whose membership has increased to 15 States since the beginning of this year, thereby reinforcing its capacity to fulfil its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The European Union, fully aware of the complex challenges faced by the international community, wishes to reiterate its full support for our Organization as a universal forum for realizing humankind's aspirations to peace and security and economic and social progress.

Against this background, the European Council, at its meeting in Cannes on 26 and 27 June, paid tribute, in a solemn declaration, to the work of our Organization and to the half-century's activities of the United Nations.

In a few weeks the Heads of State and Government of the entire world will solemnly commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our Organization. Although this occasion will give us an opportunity to assess the work accomplished by the Organization over the course of its already long history, we must above all reflect on the best way of preparing the United Nations to meet effectively the challenges facing us at the end of this century. Let me recall, with regard to this moment in the existence of the United Nations, a thought expressed by Jean Monnet in respect of the European Community, when the latter was taking its first steps:

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> "This is only a stage towards the forms of organization of the world of tomorrow."

Indeed, the disappearance of old rivalries has not meant the end of conflicts. Today we are witnessing ethnic and nationalistic conflicts and humanitarian crises of frightening proportions; a worsening of economic inequalities; contempt for human rights; the systematic violation of the rules of international humanitarian law; genocide; the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and the alarming deterioration of the environment. These are some of the most serious problems we face today. They affect us all, and we must all make a commitment to solve them.

Although, as usual, a number of issues of concern to the European Union are dealt with in detail in the memorandum distributed as an integral part of this statement, I should like to highlight some questions that are especially important to us: the situation in the former Yugoslavia, developments in Africa and the peace process in the Middle East.

The European Union continues to attach priority importance to reaching a negotiated, just and lasting peace in the conflict that is ravaging the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In this regard, we express our full support for the diplomatic process currently under way and our satisfaction at its initial results at the meeting held in Geneva on 8 September last.

We believe that the United Nations forces in the territories of the former Yugoslavia have played, and continue to play, a fundamental role. Member States of the European Union are among the main troop contributors to these forces. I wish here to pay tribute to the United Nations forces and pay homage to the soldiers who have fallen in the cause of peace, many of them citizens of the European Union.

The European Union has contributed substantially to alleviating the tremendous suffering that the war in the former Yugoslavia, and particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has inflicted upon the population. I wish to express our firm commitment to continue providing humanitarian assistance, both bilaterally and through the relevant United Nations organs and agencies.

After more than three years of bloody conflict, the latest developments in the peace process allow us to look ahead with more hope. In this process, which we hope is near at hand, the European Union intends to play a role commensurate to its commitments in all aspects of the implementation of the peace process, and in particular with regard to reconstruction efforts. Violence has destroyed property, but above all it has taken human lives and destroyed peaceful coexistence. Our main task will thus be to restore hope and offer decent living conditions to those who are still suffering the consequences of this catastrophe.

The European Union is aware of the great challenges facing Africa. Proof of our concern is that we are working to find peaceful solutions to the conflict in Rwanda and to the conflict in Burundi, beginning with the priority problem of the return of refugees. We support the urgent convening of a conference, under United Nations auspices, aimed at peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

Likewise, we support the initiatives for social and political reconstruction in countries such as Angola and Mozambique, and we welcome the work accomplished by our Organization in Angola, which, following the Lusaka peace agreement, has allowed for the establishment of the third United Nations Angola Verification Mission UNAVEM III.

We also favour a more active role for the Organization of African Unity in the prevention and solution of conflicts in Africa, and we are considering ways of supporting the establishment of effective mechanisms for preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping.

The European Union is also following the spread of and respect for human rights throughout the continent, and we are very much aware of the dire need of some African countries. Since the revision of the Fourth Lomé Convention, the European Union has attached particular relevance to humanitarian and food assistance, and we have made an effort to update our various development cooperation programmes.

The European Union has always strongly supported the peace process in the Middle East, initiated at the 1991 Conference held in Madrid. We warmly welcome the Interim Agreement reached recently by Israel and the Palestinian National Authority, which represents a new and important milestone in this process, and we look forward to the signing of the Agreement this coming Thursday. Likewise, we are confident that in the coming months we will see significant progress in the Syrian and Lebanese negotiating tracks, and that the whole region, which has already suffered enormously, will finally enter into the dynamics of a comprehensive, just, stable and long-lasting peace.

The European Union attaches paramount importance to the work carried out by our Organization in general, and in particular by the Assembly, in favour of peace in the Middle East. That is why one of our objectives in the session now beginning is to ensure that the various resolutions adopted by the Assembly on the situation in the Middle East contribute directly to the peace process, following the guidelines established in previous years.

I do not wish to conclude this first part of my statement without a reference to the work of the United Nations in Latin America. Its presence in Nicaragua through the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), the United Nations Observer Mission for the Verification of Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) and the International Commission for Support and Verification allowed for national reconciliation and the holding of elections.

The mediation between the parties and the work of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) led to the historic achievement of ending the long and terrible civil conflict in El Salvador, which culminated in the Chapultepec Agreements of January 1992. Today the presence of the Mission, which has the support of the European Union, contributes effectively to overcoming the obstacles that still persist.

In Haiti, the multinational force and the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) played a fundamental role in the restoration of democracy and in the reconstruction of the country.

In Guatemala, the United Nations role as moderator and the work of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) have brought about substantive agreements on such important issues as human rights, displaced persons and indigenous populations, which we are confident will lead to a speedy solution to the conflict. The participation of international observers in the coming elections in November, supported by the European Union, seems to us an effective formula. All these achievements have been realized with the invaluable help of the various Groups of Friends and the support of the international community.

Conscious of the universality of the challenges that lie ahead for the Organization, the European Union attaches fundamental importance to the adoption of measures allowing for the success and proper functioning of the United Nations in implementing the mandates entrusted to it by the Member States.

In this respect, the Organization's serious financial crisis, unprecedented in its history, seriously endangers the United Nations capacity for action and is a source of great concern for the European Union. Our Organization will become powerless if it does not receive the necessary political support from its Member States and the resources provided by them, particularly through the full, punctual and unconditional payment of their financial contributions, in accordance with the obligations established by the Charter.

Therefore, resolving the Organization's financial crisis is a priority objective for the European Union, which overall is the main contributor, both to the regular budget and to the peace-keeping operations budgets.

This constructive attitude is what led to the participation of the European Union in the work of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations. Our objective is to reach a consensus as soon as possible — preferably during this session — on the adoption of specific measures to bring about an improvement in the Organization's financial situation.

The European Union wishes to underline the increasingly urgent need to adopt a global package of measures to solve the United Nations grave financial situation. These measures should contemplate, *inter alia*, a possible review of the scale of assessments so that it would reflect as accurately as possible the principle of the capacity to pay, as well as the establishment of incentives and disincentives to encourage all Member States to comply with their financial obligations.

The Agenda for Development (A/48/935), submitted last year by the Secretary-General, identified the five dimensions of development: peace as the foundation, the economy as the engine of progress, the environment as a basis for sustainability, justice as a pillar of society and democracy as good governance.

The European Union attaches the greatest importance to the completion, before the end of the session that is now beginning, of a substantial and innovative agenda for development, in which it is made clear that peace cannot be built without at the same time promoting the social and economic progress of the poorest people. Through the decisions taken by the European Council held in Cannes, to which I have already referred, the European Union has made clear its determination to contribute yet greater financial resources for development aid, within the framework of both the Lomé Convention — in the case of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries — and through financial cooperation with our Mediterranean partners and friends.

Throughout this session of the Assembly we shall pay special attention to the results of the important cycle of major conferences held over recent years under the aegis of the United Nations for discussion of various subjects linked to development and human progress.

We need the Economic and Social Council to play a more vigorous and more central role within the system; we must ensure that the work of the Assembly and of the Council are complementary, avoiding all duplication.

During this session the results of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, will be submitted to the Assembly. The European Union firmly intends actively to consider these results, with a view to identifying appropriate measures to ensure the follow-up and implementation of the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen. We must not allow the platforms of action adopted at United Nations conferences to remain unimplemented.

The Fourth World Conference on Women ended in Beijing only a few days ago. The Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Conference are a step forward, backed by the results of previous United Nations conferences, on the road towards the achievement of equality, development and peace. These objectives were set out in the strategies for the advancement of women adopted in Nairobi 10 years ago.

The European Union has worked actively to achieve consolidation of the results of the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, in the field of human rights and fundamental liberties of women, and of the Cairo Conference on Population and Development. The Platform for Action adopted in Beijing as a result of such concern includes important progress in human rights, notably the right of women to control and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, without coercion, discrimination or violence.

Only three years before the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international community cannot yet be entirely satisfied with the progress achieved. This session will provide us once again with an opportunity to take stock of the situation regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms in the world, two years after the important headway made at the Vienna World Conference.

It is increasingly evident that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms plays a critical role in avoiding potential conflicts. We must therefore acknowledge the value of human rights in preventive diplomacy. Some of the serious conflicts which have recently darkened the international scene are inflicting great suffering on the civilian population, as illustrated by the alarming number of displaced persons and refugees. In this regard, the European Union wishes to reiterate its support for the immense task being performed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in this field. At the same time, we are conscious of the harmful effects of ethnic and religious discrimination on the emergence and development of such conflicts, and we reaffirm our conviction with regard to the need to move further in the adoption of measures to fight racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

The level of resources assigned by the Organization to the promotion and protection of human rights — today a mere 1.7 per cent of its regular budget — continues to be totally inadequate. A significant increase in those resources would have a positive impact on related areas, especially on activities designed to assist development. It is increasingly clear that development, human rights and democracy are interlinked, as was stated in the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development.

Furthermore, the European Union attaches great importance to the role and activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and wishes once again to draw the Assembly's attention to the pressing need to provide that Office with the human and financial resources required for the proper accomplishment of its tasks. We likewise support the Organization's efforts to enhance the role and functions of the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, under the supervision of the High Commissioner.

The International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia and the International Tribunal for Rwanda are essential factors in the struggle against the impunity of those who violate human rights. The experience of these ad hoc tribunals will undoubtedly help the work of a future international criminal court, for which a draft statute was drawn up by the International Law Commission and submitted to the Assembly's Sixth Committee at its last session.

Mankind is facing a growing number of humanitarian emergencies that require an effective response from the international community in order to alleviate the tragedy being suffered daily by tens of thousands of human beings. The establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been an outstanding contribution to the international efforts for humanitarian assistance, a field in which the often hazardous work of non-governmental organizations is also of paramount importance. We deem it essential to implement the decision taken this year by the Economic and Social Council on the need to review and reinforce the capacity of the United Nations system in the area of humanitarian assistance.

There is a need to enhance cooperation between all organizations and people, in such a way that their respective contributions may be mutually complemented and strengthened, duplication of work avoided, and a humanitarian continuum ensured.

We have witnessed important events this year in the field of the environment and in the implementation of the Rio agreements of 1992. Special mention should be made of the positive outcome of the Conferences of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the framework Convention on Climate Change, the opening for signature of the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests under the aegis of the Commission for Sustainable Development. We welcome those developments and reiterate our determination to continue working, within the Organization, towards greater cooperation in the field of the environment.

The United Nations Charter confers upon the Organization the principal task of maintaining international peace and security and entrusts that major responsibility to the Security Council.

The Security Council must continue to be the decision-making centre for issues that affect world security and must constantly adapt to currently existing situations in order to strengthen the mechanisms set forth in the Charter itself.

The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council continued its work during previous sessions of the Assembly. The members of the European Union participated actively in that work, and will continue to do so in the future.

The European Union holds the view that peace-keeping operations and missions of preventive diplomacy are and should continue to be the focal point of the Security Council's action in favour of world peace and security. We welcome the updating of the Agenda for Peace submitted by the Secretary-General at the beginning of this year.

I would remind the Assembly of the European Union's commitment to United Nations peace-keeping operations, illustrated by the fact that the Union as a whole is not only the main financial contributor to these operations, providing 37 per cent of the total budget, but also the main provider of personnel. The European Union stands firmly behind this substantial commitment to the Organization's peace-keeping endeavours. We have all suffered heavy casualties in these operations, and it is of the utmost importance that every possible step be taken to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel in peace-keeping missions.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in peace-keeping endeavours should continue to be explored to optimize the use of material and human resources and to put the mandates entrusted to those missions into practice in the quickest, most efficient and successful way.As an example of the activity of the regional organizations in this field, let me mention that on our continent the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has already developed a mechanism, still at an embryonic stage, for preventive diplomacy, the establishment of confidence-building measures and the resolution of conflicts. Acting on an initiative of the European Union, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) decided at the Budapest Summit last year to reinforce cooperation with the United Nations and with the trans-Atlantic organizations.

Furthermore, the European Union is studying with interest the proposal for stand-by arrangements. To that end, the Union supports the proposals for headquarters of a permanent nature, as well as for the United Nations stand-by forces system, and we are studying with interest other proposals which aim at improving the rapid reaction capability of the United Nations with a view to shortening the period for establishing a peace operation and facilitating its subsequent deployment.

The European Union welcomes the great step forward recently taken within our Organization by the decision to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) indefinitely. This is fundamental progress in the entire disarmament process and the pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation. The decision adopted and the strengthening of the inspection procedure and the principles and objectives of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation constitute an enormous step in the right direction. We also welcome the steady pace of the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which the European Union hopes and is confident will be concluded in 1996 at the latest.

We must now focus our efforts on the universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The European Union invites all States that have not yet done so to become signatories of the NPT. Another European Union priority in the field of nuclear disarmament is the finalization of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons and explosives. The European Union regrets that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet been able to set up an ad hoc committee to begin negotiations on this issue.

Once again, we appeal to all States that signed the Convention of the Banning of the Development, Production, Storage and Use of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction to proceed to ratify it so that it may come into force as soon as possible.

Furthermore, the control and limitation of the use of certain conventional weapons is also cause for concern for the European Union. Through its common action, the Union aims to continue to encourage the activities of the United Nations in its fight against the devastating effects of anti-personnel mines in many territories around the world. Also in the field of conventional disarmament, we will pay special attention to the results of the Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, in order to render it more effective and to widen its scope.

We believe in the United Nations. We believe in the universality, binding character and supremacy of international law, which is the result of the development of relations among nations and consensus among peoples. The European Union gives its unconditional support to the Organization's ideals and actions.

We are sure that these first 50 years are but the first stage in an unprecedented task that presents no other alternative, given that its chief goal — that of assuring that we all live together in peace, as well as the comprehensive development of human beings — can be attained only through disinterested cooperation among peoples.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Andrei Kozyrev.

Mr. Kozyrev (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* First of all, allow me to congratulate my colleague, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Professor Diogo Freitas Do Amaral, on the occasion of his election to the high post of the President of the General Assembly.

Each of the 50 sessions of the General Assembly has been a step for the international community on a difficult road in search of peace within itself, for the strengthening of the indispensable role of the United Nations. The current session will be marked as the anniversary session by the addresses to be made by the Heads of State and Government in late October. Russia's views on the prospects and difficulties of establishing partnership in a multi-polar and interdependent world — and it is with equal partnership that we link our national and state interests — will be stated by the Head of the Russian State, President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin.

If half a century of experience of the United Nations teaches us anything, it teaches us first of all that only the equality of States and respect for the diversity of cultures, religions and national traditions can serve as the basis for security and prosperity in the modern world. But the formula "unity in diversity" also presupposes everyone's compliance with fundamental principles of international law and order, respect for human rights and the promotion of economic progress. This is the essence of the United Nations Charter, which identifies both common ideals and goals and equal rights and obligations for all States without "double standards".

They say that generals always prepare for the last war. Politicians and diplomats have no right to prepare for the last peace. On the contrary, it is necessary to avoid slipping back into a bloc mentality and dividing countries into "friends and foes", whether in politics or in economics.

We can indeed make the next 50 years an era of the United Nations if we accept as its basis the indivisibility of international security and sustainable social and economic development for all.

This question becomes more and more acute against the background of humanitarian disasters in Africa and other regions of the "third world", and the social price of the initial stage of reforms in the post-socialist countries. No one will be able to hide from global problems behind dividing lines of national egotism and economic discrimination, or even expanding military alliances. Such things will not rein in, but rather spur on the spread of international terrorism and drugs, and whip up the flames of local conflicts and the arms race.

One of the principles of the "Agenda for Development" which is being formulated now should be the early elimination of the remaining discriminatory restrictions in the world economy, trade and technology transfer. In particular, Russia, which is successfully implementing unparalleled reforms, should be recognized as an equal trade and economic partner with an economy in transition.

Such a strategy should also provide for the promotion of the economic rehabilitation of countries and regions affected by armed conflicts. The United Nations, its specialized agencies and Member States should immediately begin to address directly the problem of the economic rehabilitation of Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia as a whole, whose peoples have suffered from war and economic sanctions that have been in effect for too long. Russia is ready to take an active part in these efforts, and we do and will continue to contribute substantially to a political settlement. The real chances for such a settlement should not be sacrificed to power or unilateral approaches.

The international community should make equally great efforts to achieve progress in all aspects of the peace process in the Middle East and the post-conflict rehabilitation of all States of that region. We congratulate Israel and the Palestinians on the occasion of their reaching an agreement in Taba, whose official signing ceremony will take place on 28 September next in Washington under the chairmanship of President Clinton. We intend to continue our joint efforts with the United States and to make our contribution to the coming Amman summit conference.

Europe needs a new model of general and comprehensive security, without double standards or dividing lines.

International dialogue on this issue is already under way. I believe that the active involvement of the United Nations and its specialized agencies is necessary to the efforts aimed at the development of this model. Incidentally, the General Assembly was born in the Old World.

A new approach is required to disarmament issues in Europe. On the basis of the implementation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (certainly taking into account new realities) as early as next spring we should arrive at new major agreements based on the unity of the vital security interests of the peoples of the continent instead of the bloc logic of the past.

Our proposal to all nuclear-weapon States to elaborate a treaty on nuclear safety and strategic stability has become even more timely.

The indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty establishes favourable conditions for this. Our common task is to create the necessary political conditions for those States that have not already done so to accede to it as non-nuclear States. We consider it necessary, as a matter of priority, to conclude as soon as possible, but not later than 1996, work on the comprehensive test-ban treaty. From this rostrum, Russia calls for a universal and permanent moratorium on nuclear tests.

The summit of the "Political Eight" on nuclear safety, which is to be held next spring in Moscow at the initiative of the President of Russia and which was approved in Halifax, will make a major contribution to global stability.

We would like the United Nations to take urgent measures on the prevention of illicit trafficking in light firearms and the proliferation of anti-personnel mines. It is these "light" firearms that have led to enormous human losses in Rwanda and Angola, Liberia and Bosnia, Tajikistan and Abkhazia. Russia has already introduced a moratorium on the export of the most dangerous types of anti-personnel mines. We urge other States to follow our example.

This issue should be seriously considered in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. While supporting the activities of the Commission, we believe that it should adopt a new agenda corresponding to the current scale of cooperation in the area of security and to new threats and challenges in this field.

The problem of global adherence to a single standard in the area of human rights and basic democratic institutions is very acute. Russia, approaching free, multipartite parliamentary and presidential elections, is making its own contribution to the establishment of these very standards. We invite observers from foreign States and international organizations to attend the forthcoming elections.

It was not so long ago that dozens of agenda items of the General Assembly were devoted to the struggle against apartheid. Now it seems unbelievable that this problem has been solved, owing to a large extent, to the efforts of the United Nations. I sincerely welcome the accomplishments of the people and the Government of South Africa, headed by Nelson Mandela, in the democratization and creation of a free, multiracial society.

But did we manage to overcome the danger of violence arising through fascism, racism, and political and religious extremism? Alas, the answer is far from reassuring. That is why the international community has no right to abandon its efforts in this direction and must not tolerate the emergence of double standards.

The signing of the CIS conventions on human rights and fundamental freedoms and on the rights of national and language minorities was the response of the CIS States to the United Nations recommendations on the creation of a single humanitarian sphere in this part of the world. However, much has yet to be done before a unitary approach to human rights can become a norm of life for, among others, 25 million of our compatriots in some countries of the Commonwealth and the Baltic States. A double standard here is unacceptable.

Russia is interested in the adoption at this session of decisions on such issues as the struggle against racism, all forms of xenophobia and aggressive nationalism, ensuring the rights of minorities and the promotion of democracy and the rule of law in countries in transition. The United Nations should further pursue its policy of qualitative improvement of the international human rights protection machinery, primarily by strengthening its control and preventive functions and enhancing its focus on specific action. The policy of single standards must become an incontestable rule in the sphere of peace-keeping as well. Justice without force is powerless, while force without justice is tyrannical.

There have been many achievements in United Nations peace-keeping efforts. Without the Blue Helmets, the world would be much more dangerous and dozens of conflicts would have been much more bloody. We are proud that approximately 20,000 Russian servicemen are serving as peace-keepers in United Nations and CIS operations.

However, if we want force always to go hand-in-hand with justice in the activities of the United Nations and those who cooperate in them, strict observance of Security Council decisions must be ensured. Here, the Secretary-General and his staff can always count on the support of Russia and, I am confident, of all other Members of the United Nations. The United Nations should be protected from setbacks like that which has occurred in Bosnia.

In general, it is necessary radically to improve United Nations peace-keeping through precision of the criteria and terms of the United Nations involvement in areas of tension; a close linkage between peace-keeping operations and efforts to achieve the peaceful settlement of conflicts; the efficient operation of the whole functional chain — peace-keeping planning, command and control. We are for the earliest possible implementation of the Secretary-General's proposal on the establishment of United Nations reserve forces.

We welcome the conclusion of the Convention on the protection of United Nations personnel, which I signed today on behalf of Russia. This instrument will help to save lives of hundreds of peace-keepers in hot spots of the world.

Peace-making activities undertaken by Russia and its Commonwealth partners contribute to a considerable extent to ensuring regional and international stability. We appreciate fruitful cooperation with the United Nations in Tajikistan and Georgia. However, the United Nations support of our collective efforts sometimes unfortunately reminds us of a saying: "Too little, too late". Russia, together with its CIS partners, expects the United Nations to make a radical change in its attitude towards peace-making problems in our part of the world.

During the 50 years of the existence of the United Nations, sanctions have been an instrument that the Organization has used to deal with the instigators of conflicts. Now, the time has come to give this instrument a more selective and precise nature. The principal criteria in this regard are: distinct objectives underlying sanctions, advanced coordination of conditions, and mechanisms for lifting them once the objectives are attained.

As a newly elected member of the Executive Council of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Russia intends to make an essential contribution to overcoming a new global crisis, namely the tragedy of millions of refugees. To this end, we intend to seek practical results from the international conference on refugees and migrants within the post-Soviet space.

At this session the General Assembly should give new impetus to collective efforts by the international community in combating crime, illicit drug-trafficking and terrorism. The explosions in Oklahoma and Paris, the taking of hostages in Budennovsk and chemical terrorist attacks in Tokyo — these are bells tolling for us all.

Whatever agenda item we consider, we are convinced time and again that the answers are to be found only on the basis of a single standard: respect for the United Nations Charter and for the purposes and principles of the United Nations that have withstood the severe tests of the past five decades and are lighting the way into the twenty-first century.

The President: I now call on the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, His Excellency the Right Honourable Malcolm Rifkind.

Mr. Rifkind (United Kingdom): May I first congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency in this most important year for the United Nations.

It is nearly half a century since the General Assembly of the United Nations first met, in London. King George VI told the visiting representatives of 50 countries that no more important meeting had ever taken place there. The founders of the United Nations had taken on themselves a heavy responsibility and a noble work.

Today we must pay tribute to those founders and their efforts. Earlier models of collective security had soon crumbled. The League of Nations collapsed after less than two decades. The United Nations has proved more durable. Over 50 years it has helped spread peace in place of war. It has worked to push back hunger and disease and to advance democracy and human rights. Without the United Nations we would have a bleaker world.

I am delighted to add Britain's voice to these celebrations at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. After five decades it is timely to recall what the United Nations has achieved. At the start of a new half-century it is right to weigh the lessons of past experience.

The United Nations is a means to an end. Its value lies not simply in the shared principles and ambitions enshrined in the Charter, but in practical results. Its successes are real.

The United Nations has been a force for peace. From Korea in the 1950s to Kuwait in the 1990s, it has helped check and reverse the tides of aggression. In the Near East and Cyprus, United Nations troops have worked for decades to sustain a measure of stability. In Cambodia the United Nations mounted its most complex operation ever to rebuild a country shattered by 13 years of war. In Mozambique United Nations peace-keepers have helped demobilize 100,000 combatants, allowing democratic elections and the creation of a unified army.

The United Nations has been a source of relief from suffering. Since 1951 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has provided food, shelter, medicine and education for over 30 million refugees. United Nations programmes have immunized 80 per cent of the world's children against disease. United Nations sanitation and nutrition projects have halved child mortality in developing countries.

The United Nations has been a motor for democracy and sustainable development. It has given electoral help to over 40 countries. Its charters and covenants set international standards of human rights. It has brokered agreements to conserve world forests and fish stocks.

The United Nations has done good work for five decades. My country, the United Kingdom, has been at its heart from the start. From the drafting of the Charter, as the first host, in London, of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, we have been a staunch supporter of the United Nations. From the first stirrings of environmental concern in the 1960s, to the fight against AIDS since the 1980s, through to management innovation and financial reform in the 1990s, Britain has been a driving force for the changing agenda of the United Nations. In 1947 we were a party to the first case to come before the International Court of Justice. This year a British judge became the Court's first ever woman member.

Even before the end of the cold war, British forces had served the United Nations cause for decades. For 30 years the United Nations operation in Cyprus has depended on British troops and logistics. In the last five years British forces have served in Kuwait, Cambodia, Rwanda, Angola, Georgia and, of course, Bosnia. Today Britain commits more troops to United Nations peace-keeping than any other Member State — with 10,250 out of a total of 69,000.

Near the end of its first half-century, the end of the cold war opened a new chapter for the United Nations. After years of super-Power stalemate, it again became possible to take effective action in the Security Council, including by authorizing the use of force to reverse aggression. Almost immediately a rash of ethnically based regional disputes began to break out, from the former Yugoslavia in the West to Central Asia in the East.

Early experience brought a sense of exhilaration. When Saddam Hussein made his foolish miscalculation and sought to wipe Kuwait off the map, the United Nations was the means chosen to stop him, and it worked. Talk of a new world order did not seem empty.

Five years on, the record looks more diffuse. The international community could do little to halt disintegration in Somalia or to avert bloody collapse in Rwanda. The wars of secession in the former Yugoslavia have dragged on for four years.

But those who speak of United Nations failure are wrong. The pendulum that swung too far towards euphoria after the Gulf War has swung too far towards despair. Look at the facts.

Alongside the torment of Bosnia and Rwanda are the democratic revolutions that have swept South Africa, South America and Central and Eastern Europe. We live in a post-apartheid world, with a Europe of free nations and the Middle East peace process a reality rather than a slogan. The United Nations has helped bring about peace in Namibia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique and at last, perhaps, in Angola. Even in Bosnia, the real good the United Nations has done has been obscured by unreal expectations. The reality of the past five years is not one of spreading world disorder, but of painstaking, steady efforts to build peace.

Compare this record to the grim setting for the first General Assembly meeting in 1946, when whole regions lay in ruins after five years of world war. The truth is that the history of serious attempts at international cooperation is still quite young. The United Nations is by far its most successful expression. There is today no one country or group of countries ready and able to cope with new world disorder all alone, and since regional instability and economic dislocation affect all our interests, we need a strong and effective United Nations.

This is not to deny the need for change. But it is no good simply blaming the Organization. We, the United Nations Members, must meet our obligations to help improve the system. We have done much in recent years. The United Nations is better able now to plan, mount and conduct missions. Britain and others have seconded military officers to New York to develop the planning and operational capability and funded secondments by other nations. Last year Britain helped launch a new initiative on African peace-keeping. That is bearing fruit now, in United Nations regional training, in closer cooperation between African countries and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Conflict Resolution Mechanism and in products like the Anglo-French Peace-keeping Glossary, developed by the Ghanaian Staff College.

The process of reform must continue. The more seriously the United Nations addresses issues like pre-planning, logistic support and command and control, the more confidence troop contributors will have, the more forces will be put at the disposal of the United Nations and the more effective the operations will be.

Changing procedures is not enough. We must learn to be more realistic in what we ask of the United Nations. That means not setting aspirations we cannot provide the means to meet. Sometimes a declaratory statement is useful to put the international community's views on record, to underpin a consensus. At other times it may be better for the Security Council to remain silent than to issue unrealistic pronouncements.

Bosnia and Somalia have shown the limits of peace-keeping. They offer a clear lesson. The United Nations is not yet suited to fight wars. Peace enforcement is better left, perhaps, to a coalition of the willing acting under United Nations authority. We must not send in the United Nations to keep a peace which does not exist and then blame the United Nations for failure, nor send it in mandated and equipped to keep the peace and then blame it because it does not enforce the peace.

Whatever the blemishes of recent years, there is greater scope today for effective international action than ever before. The United Nations should be the centre-point of such work. I suggest we should focus greater effort in future on two areas.

First, preventive action is better than cure. Far better than containing or extinguishing a fire is stopping it from igniting. Bosnia is the most tragic example. Today the prospects for peace look a little stronger. I commend the efforts of Dick Holbrooke, supported by the Contact Group, to mediate between the parties, and the agreement reached in Geneva on 8 September. Many hard choices lie ahead for all sides before a final settlement is achieved. But we have made a start. It is vital that all parties seize this chance for peace. Only political negotiations, not military force, can secure that.

But the war has dragged on for three and a half years now. Tens of thousands of people have been killed; millions more have been made homeless. It will take years for the wounds inflicted on that country to heal. Certainly the suffering would have been many times worse without a United Nations presence. When I was in Sarajevo last week, the Bosnian Government told me how much it values the work done by British and other forces to help the people of Bosnia. But how much better for all these people if war had been avoided from the start. Perhaps much of the damage and destruction might have been prevented by closer international attention to the problems and tensions arising from the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.

We have started to learn that lesson. The early deployment of a small United Nations force in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has helped to stop conflict from spreading there. Elsewhere the quiet diplomacy of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has helped defuse tension in Ukraine and Albania; has nudged adversaries toward peace talks in Georgia, Moldova and Chechnya. There are few headlines for successes that avert fighting and save lives. But the headlines of war carry a heavy price. Preventive action is a wiser investment.

Many routes exist. Britain and France have sketched out one model: to use the skills of diplomats, of soldiers, of academics and others to defuse tension and promote dialogue. The presence of aid workers, human rights monitors, or United Nations envoys can help contain a brewing crisis; and all credit to the United Nations representative doing that in Burundi. We strongly support the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to work with the United Nations in preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. The initiative on African peace-keeping will help.

So many different actors can play a part. The crucial point is not who acts but when. Early warning of a crisis and prompt action by the international community are the real key to avoiding further tragedy of the kind we have seen in Bosnia.

My second proposal is for a new approach to peace-building. To provide lasting security requires more than diplomacy and military force. To build real peace we must bridge the gap between our humanitarian work and our long-term development work.

Aid workers have grown used to coping with the debris of war. In the past five years the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has given help to millions fleeing conflict: Rwandans in Tanzania and Zaire, Afghans in Iran and Pakistan, Liberians in Côte d'Ivoire and in Guinea. But too often we treat short-term humanitarian needs in isolation. Huge sums have been spent in humanitarian efforts in Rwanda, for example. But Rwanda's long-term stability depends on rebuilding the structures of society and on civil rights; helping local communities to help themselves, in areas from health and housing through to an effective judiciary.

I suggest that two elements are key to a new approach.

First of all, we must adopt a longer-term perspective in tackling immediate crises. Even when a cease-fire is holding, or elections have taken place, if the framework of society is shaky, a continued international presence can offer it stability until a government can cope. An abrupt end to a mission, by contrast, can be very destabilizing. In El Salvador, for example, a small human rights team stayed on after the United Nations troops had left, to provide further advice and monitoring. Peace-keepers themselves can help begin the work of reconstruction. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the aid agencies have been doing that for over a year in central Bosnia, underpinning reconciliation between Muslim and Croat communities by rebuilding roads and hospitals and schools.

I strongly support the thesis of the Secretary-General's recent report: that we must go beyond electoral assistance, to preparing the social and institutional ground in which democracy and civil society can put down firm roots. The task of rebuilding Bosnia could be a model for the future.

Secondly, we need far better coordination in what we do. If funds are to be gathered and used quickly and effectively, donors themselves must make a greater effort to meet their promises of help. Before operations begin, as planning gets under way, the international financial institutions must be involved from the start, as they were in Cambodia. All the actors in the United Nations system must be working together, military and political, humanitarian and development, crossing the traditional boundaries between rival baronies. Such a coalition of interests could plug the gap we see too often now, until the major reconstruction programmes can begin.

Mr. Huaraka (Namibia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My proposal is to build on these principles in United Nations programmes for stabilization and transition. There are many areas where international expertise can help restore a society; creating judicial systems; training an army; developing a finance ministry or a diplomatic service. To fulfil these needs, we should be prepared to loan our experts to countries emerging from conflict, as Britain's Know-How Fund does for countries in Central and Eastern Europe emerging from communism. United Nations programmes for stabilization and transition could be the greatest contribution we could make to international security.

The demands on the United Nations have grown enormously. To meet them the United Nations needs change at the centre too. I welcome work under way to cut costs and reduce waste in New York. The whole United Nations system must learn from that example. We need better planning and budgeting, an end to fraud and mismanagement. More subcontracting can help, using non-governmental organizations, even private companies, for tasks like mine clearance and logistics in Angola. And there is still too much duplication between the United Nations agencies. Rhetoric is not enough. Reform has to be real, and it has to be soon.

This is not a side issue. It is not a narrow interest. If we are to do the United Nations work effectively — peace-keeping, aid or humanitarian — we must use its resources better. No one, G-7 or G-77, benefits from waste. Recent experience has shown the United Nations is in some ways ill-fitted for its tasks; under-powered in some areas, like peace-keeping and preventive diplomacy; but, however, still bloated in other parts of the system. United Nations Members must pay their dues. But the United Nations must justify those funds, and get the most from them, by hard decisions on duplication and over-staffing, and diverting resources to the top priorities.

Britain supports enlargement of the Security Council to broaden its base without reducing its effectiveness. Permanent membership is the key issue. Permanent members of the Security Council must be both willing and able to make a significant contribution through the United Nations to international security. That is what the Security Council is about. That is what it must remain if it is to be effective. Germany and Japan are playing an increasing part across the range of United Nations business, and are among the top three financial contributors. It is right that they should benefit from an expansion of the permanent membership, with the wider rights that entails, but also with the wider responsibilities to contribute to security and peace-keeping. Broad geographical balance in an enlarged Council also needs to be maintained.

But the United Nations system will never work if we do not fund it properly. The United Nations is on the verge of financial collapse. It is owed over $3.7 billion in unpaid contributions. Troop contributors are owed nearly $1 billion. Last year 39 countries failed to pay at all. The United Kingdom favours tightening of penalties for non-payment, including the charging of interest on late payments. We find unacceptable cross-funding of regular budget deficits from the peace-keeping budget. Perhaps an appropriate policy could best be entitled: No Representation without Taxation!

The financing arrangements must change. Some members pay too much. Others, like the new economic giants of the developing world, now pay less than they should. We need a scale that is simpler and reflects a country's real capacity to pay, and without the additional anomalies and distortions of the present system. Britain and Sweden have put forward ideas. We need progress soon.

But the problem is not solved by turning the tap off. This year we have all reaffirmed our support for goals and work of the United Nations. But empty words will not pay bills.

The final lesson from the last 50 years may be the most important: the case for a strong, effective United Nations.

In conclusion, may I say that the United Nations today faces a crisis of confidence. United States Congressmen may be the most vocal sceptics. They are not alone. The air of optimism, of a fresh start after the cold war, is overtaken in some quarters by gloom at the instability and fragmentation around us, and pessimism at our ability to cope. This despair is dangerous.

Multilateral action is not an add-on to national policy. It gives wider legitimacy to principles we value, such as human rights and democracy. It spreads the cost of aims we share, such as freeing Kuwait from invasion or restoring democracy in Haiti. It lets us work with others to fight common threats, such as greenhouse-gas emissions or the international drug trade.

The price is not high. The bill for all United Nations peace-keeping, all aid and development work last year, was slightly over 3.5 per cent of the United States' defence budget, or less than the United Kingdom spends on police and public administration. One day of Operation Desert Storm cost as much as all that year's United Nations peace-keeping. The price of disengagement and disorder would be greater. Public support is there. Even in the United States, polls are clear: people support the United Nations, and they support international peace-keeping. We have a duty to our electorates to continue the United Nations work.

It is easy to forget the United Nations successes over 50 years. It is easy to turn away from disorder and chaos. But the world is too small. Crises in distant countries affect us too; our commerce, our citizens overseas, our neighbour's security — ultimately it is our own. It is in our interest to play what part we can to build a more decent world. If the United Nations were not here to help do that, we would have to invent something else.

The experience of five decades offers lessons for the future. I know the Secretary-General is committed to change. Getting the United Nations we need for the twenty-first century requires the support and participation of all Member States. The United Kingdom has played a full part in the United Nations for 50 years, and we will continue to do so.

The Acting President: The next speaker is the Chairman of the delegation of Bangladesh, His Excellency Mr. Reaz Rahman. I now call on him.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. A. S. M. Mostafizur Rahman, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, who, though present in New York, is unable to attend this Assembly for reasons of health.

> "I warmly congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his unanimous election as President of this historic fiftieth anniversary session of the United Nations General Assembly. His election is a tribute, not only to him personally, but to his great country, Portugal. I am confident that he will do great honour to the legacy of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, to whom we owe deep appreciation, not least for his sponsorship of the establishment, on 14 September, of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the strengthening of the United Nations system.
>
> "Let me also commend our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his dedicated and untiring efforts to promote the effectiveness of this world body.
>
> "In this fiftieth anniversary year, the United Nations has reached a critical turning-point in appraising its past and in charting a viable course for its future, based on the renewed commitment, trust and consensus of its Member States.
>
> "The world of today is obviously quite different from that of 1945. Then, the United Nations, in the wake of the devastating global conflagration that was the Second World War, was called upon
>
>> 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.

In the wake of the cold war, the United Nations is now called upon to consolidate and secure an uncertain and amorphous peace.

"The end of the cold war had fuelled hopes that the United Nations, freed from nuclear and ideological confrontation, would devote its full attention to building a peaceful and more equitable world; tackle the challenge of world poverty; advance regional conflicts to resolution; distribute the benefits of peace dividends; and move towards fulfilling the unrealized premises of the Charter, especially with regard to collective security.

"These hopes were belied. The world of the 1990s is more dangerous in many ways than the cold-war era. There is greater tension in more places, a further degradation in the quality of life and many more complex issues of law and ethics, management and practical cooperation. Negative impulses have assumed a variety of dimensions within States, between groups of States and globally.

"Within States, nations have come under siege from multiple threats, retarding their capacity to act effectively or independently. Political instability has fuelled an economic breakdown, and economic backwardness has created political upheaval in a never-ending vicious circle. Long-suppressed national, ethnic and cultural rivalries have resurfaced, unleashing bigotry, extremism and violence. They have generated powerful centrifugal forces that have not only threatened to but actually breached established boundaries. Demagogues, political separatists and fringe groups are being encouraged and supported by external forces to challenge the legitimacy of Governments and their capacity to govern.

"On another plane, fears are surfacing that the bipolar world of the past 50 years could now assume a North-South configuration, not between opposing political and social systems, but between rich and poor nations. Anxiety is increasing in the South that their interests are being marginalized; that development resources are being diverted or are dwindling; that their potential to act as partners in revitalizing the world economy is being ignored; and that new constraints and conditionalities are being selectively imposed.

"Globally, new forces are emerging that no State acting alone can control but which threaten the legitimacy of all States. Pollution, eco-damage, devastating diseases, speculative dealers and money-launderers, organized crime, arms smugglers and terrorists have eaten into all societies, vitiated values and crippled development. Rapid technological and transnational processes are reducing the ability of States to act on their own or to regulate domestic policies affecting the movement of goods, services, labour and capital. Tensions over resources are a case in point. Forty per cent of the world's population live on the banks of rivers or lakes shared by two or more countries. Dams and irrigation projects cause serious tension and actual conflict.

"Ironically, at a time when the United Nations is in greater demand then ever before and its capacity stretched to the limit, a serious campaign of vilification has been launched against it. It has been charged with mismanagement, inefficiency, corruption, excessive costs and over-staffing. Its growing membership, in the wake of decolonization, has been termed irresponsible, obstructive and divisive, and it has been accused of indiscriminately exercising the so-called 'tyranny of the majority'. This tarnished image, propagated by a few but rejected by many, has left deep scars that have diminished the United Nations.

"It is against this background that I now turn to some of the priority concerns facing Bangladesh.

"First and foremost is the financial crisis that threatens to undermine the United Nations. The Secretary-General has declared that the United Nations is already technically bankrupt. The financial situation has to be placed on an adequate and sustainable footing and its deterioration urgently reversed.

"Bangladesh has consistently held that the current financial difficulties were primarily a cash-flow imbalance due mainly to the failure by some Member States, in particular some major contributors, to fulfil their Charter obligations in full and on time. These Member States must give practical effect to their commitment to the United Nations by paying their assessed contribution in full and on time, including all arrears. Capacity to pay remains the fundamental tenet in determining

Member States' contributions. To proceed on the basis that simply a revision of the scales of assessment would provide a panacea to all financial ills is simplistic and misleading. It will neither change the aggregate amount of revenues available to the United Nations nor guarantee better cash flows or prompt payment. While it is likely that for some time to come the bulk of United Nations revenues will come from assessments and voluntary contributions, Bangladesh supports exploring the possibility of providing independent revenue sources for the United Nations through various international transactions and taxation.

"Bangladesh supports the reform efforts that have been initiated to revitalize and restructure the main organs of the United Nations and to achieve a more dynamic interrelationship for them. We intend to participate actively and constructively in the open-ended, high-level Working Group on United Nations reform which is to review the Secretary-General's Agendas for Peace and Development, respectively, and the report submitted by Member States and independent commissions. While we support the idea that the broad objective of the reform is to strengthen the response and efficiency of the United Nations system in promoting the goals of development, security, justice and equality and to improve accountability and responsibility, we reject pursuit of reforms of a purely mechanical or managerial nature. It seems ironic that the yardstick for determining what should or should not be pruned has been applied selectively in the past, with peace-keeping operations approved by the Security Council proliferating at the cost of development programmes. Catchwords of cost-effectiveness, financial stringency, trimming management, redundancy, waste and inefficiency seem intended more to constrain control and reduce the United Nations role than improve its capability of responding to the needs of the international community.

"Our position with regard to Security Council reform has concentrated more on strengthening the transparency and efficiency of the Council's mandate than on enlargement of the permanent membership. While we fully support enlargement of the overall size of the Council to reflect the growth in membership of the United Nations, we believe that an increase in permanent members should be considered only on the basis of the most stringent criteria, and on the basis of global recognition and consensus. We are opposed in principle to creating new centres of privilege or distinctions that can distort the principle of sovereign equality.

"Bangladesh welcomes the consensus achieved in the outcomes of the major conferences in Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing on population, social development and women, which supplement the results of the Earth Summit, the children's Summit and the Vienna Conference on Human Rights. Together they have forged a meaningful and comprehensive social agenda that has reinforced poverty eradication and people-centred sustainable development. It must be emphasized, however, that social development is dependent on economic growth, which can be fuelled only in an international economic environment which is conducive to it.

"The global society is only as strong as its weakest link. The plight of the least developed countries assumes special relevance and importance in this 1995 mid-term review year of the least developed countries' Programme of Action for the 1990s. Their continuing crises calls for immediate remedial action especially in increasing official development assistance, writing off debts and assuring greater trade access on preferential terms.

"Bangladesh has followed closely and supports strongly the evolution and development of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace. We agree with the priority emphasis that has been placed on preventive diplomacy and conflict-prevention measures and recognize especially their cost-effectiveness. We believe that regional efforts and regional agencies should be utilized more frequently and their capacity strengthened. Bangladesh has actively contributed to the peace-keeping mission of the United Nations and has always favourably responded in providing troops. We have closely examined and positively responded to the request for the provision of stand-by troops. We are also favourably inclined to support a rapid-reaction capability for providing humanitarian assistance.

"At plenary meetings the General Assembly will have occasion to address in greater depth some of the most pressing and critical political issues on the agenda, including the ongoing conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which prospects for a negotiated solution have considerably brightened on the basis of the Contact Group's Peace Plan and the Geneva Declaration of Principles of 8 September 1995; the continuing peace efforts in the Middle East and the new interim agreement between Israel and Palestinian leaders as a follow-up to the Oslo Agreement; the status of democracy and human rights in Haiti; and the review of the work of international tribunals established in former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. Given the fluidity and rapid evolution of events in some of these crises, it is our hope to comment on them at length during consideration of the specific item.

"Let me say in conclusion that there is no doubt in our mind that the United Nations remains the only forum where we can meet the challenges of the future by drawing upon our combined solidarity and willingness to confront them together. Bangladesh reaffirms its firm and unwavering commitment to this world body and the pursuit of its great goals."

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Her Excellency Miss Tarja Kaarina Halonen.

Miss Halonen (Finland): Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the presidency of this fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that under his wise leadership we shall come to a successful conclusion of this historic session.

My Spanish colleague, Minister Javier Solana, has already spoken on behalf of the European Union. I fully associate Finland with his statement.

Fifty years ago the founders of the United Nations established the maintenance of international peace and security as the primary purpose of their new Organization. They also undertook to take effective collective measures to that end. Fifty years later the condition of the world is dramatically different, but the United Nations is as indispensable now as it was then. Its role under Chapter VII of the Charter continues to be a vital bulwark of world security, but its mission of peace now ranges much wider: the United Nations focuses on prevention of conflicts, it sustains development, it seeks to ensure the human rights and dignity of every individual.

The world needs a strong United Nations. Certainly the small, the weak and the underprivileged among us need the United Nations the most. But the United Nations, in turn, needs the full support of all its Member States.

It is intolerable that while all of us here will once again reaffirm our faith in the United Nations, the Organization is once more experiencing extreme financial difficulties. In this context I should like to draw the attention of the Assembly to a statement adopted yesterday by the Foreign Ministers of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland — on the financial situation of the United Nations. The text of this statement will be made available later.

We all agree that the United Nations needs to streamline its work, set clear priorities and cut out activities that have become obsolete. Yet the main reason for the difficulties is that the majority of the Member States, permanent members of the Security Council among them, do not pay their assessed contributions on time, in full or without conditions.

As a consequence, those who pay on time, in full and without conditions — such as Finland — are in fact penalized for their behaviour. It is high time for all Member States to acknowledge that to pay one's dues is not an option, but an obligation, and that this obligation must be fulfilled, and fulfilled punctually. When payments are not made on time, it is normal to charge interest. This should be done also in the United Nations.

It is also clear that the present scale of assessments needs to be revised rapidly to take into account the real capacity to pay of each Member State. Finland is prepared to support adjustments in cases where the pains of transition, natural disasters or other circumstances truly beyond the control of the Government concerned justify such exceptional treatment. On the other hand, upward adjustments should be the rule when economic development justifies them.

A strong United Nations needs an effective Security Council, capable of acting on behalf of the entire membership. Finland is pleased that the Security Council has assumed its role under the Charter after the paralysis of the cold-war years. We also welcome the steps the Council has taken to improve its working methods and the transparency of its deliberations.

To remain effective in the long run, the Security Council must be representative. There can be no effectiveness without legitimacy. Legitimacy grows from a true reflection of the increase in United Nations membership as well as from a frank recognition of changing realities. Finland therefore supports an increase in Council membership by five to eight new members.

The groundwork for the reform of the Council has been laid after two years of intensive debate in the Working Group of the General Assembly. Now it is time to move from discussion to true negotiation between Member States.

A strong United Nations does not mean that our Organization should do what we, as Member States, should in the first instance do ourselves. Under the Charter, Member States themselves have an obligation to seek peaceful solutions to disputes and to make every effort to prevent conflicts in advance. The United Nations assists, but cannot replace, the Member States, nor should it be expected to do so.

The permanence of, and unfailing respect for, universal norms is the basis of human security, whether in relations between nations or within the nations themselves.

The historic decision by the parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to make that Treaty permanent meant that a cornerstone of international security was kept in place and that the prospect of the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons became more attainable. The next step should be the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty by the summer of 1996. The negotiations in Geneva are proceeding well. Under these circumstances, any testing is therefore a cause for concern. Finland has expressed its disapproval of the recent tests by France and China.

The President returned to the Chair.

The breakthrough achieved in the Middle East peace process two years ago will be followed by a new important agreement, to be signed this week. I should like to congratulate the negotiators on their courage and persistence. The international community should continue to support the reconstruction that peace has made possible.

Finland is encouraged by the recent turn towards a peaceful solution in the former Yugoslavia. The international community has shown resolve in defending Sarajevo from persistent and cruel attacks on innocent civilians. The international community must show equal resolve once the peace agreement is reached. It must help to maintain peace on the ground and to reconstruct what has been shattered by war. But, above all, it is necessary that all parties to the conflict now finally commit themselves to peace.

Some of the lessons from the conflicts in former Yugoslavia and elsewhere are clear. The capacity of the United Nations and the international community to coordinate an international response is still inadequate and not integrated enough, as so many speakers before me have already mentioned here. The United Nations bears the main responsibility to prevent, to react rapidly to and to manage often very complex emergencies. It is the central actor in peace-keeping operations. We must not allow the lack of financial resources and organizational difficulties to stand in the way.

A continuum of ideas based on a broad concept of security — from respect for the rule of law and human rights to support for sustainable economic and social development — is already available in the Secretary-General's twin Agendas for Peace and for Development. It is now for the Member States to put the best of those ideas into practice. Finland, together with its European Union partners, will do its share.

True international security begins with the security of the individual, sometimes in relation to his or her own Government. Violations of human rights, including women's rights, are not justifiable on any grounds. There are no cultural exceptions to universal human rights.

The importance of mechanisms for the effective protection of human rights is now widely recognized. This is manifested, *inter alia,* in the efforts to establish systematic and organized judicial inquiry into, and penalties against, violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Finland supports the early establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

In addition to judicial mechanisms open mainly to States, the question of the right of individuals to rely on international human rights instruments is worthy of serious study and development. The very positive experiences gained during the 45 years that the European Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe has been functioning illustrate the merits of this approach to human rights. I can speak to that.

The Beijing Conference and other recent United Nations Conferences — Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen — need active and integrated follow-up throughout the United Nations system. The platforms are there. They have established beyond doubt that sustainable human development and human security can be realized only through the empowerment of individuals and a strong civic society under law. In the international follow-up of the Beijing Conference, the roles of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council are crucial, not only for the efficient implementation of the Platform for Action, but also for strengthening the Organization in the social and economic fields. At the same time, action at the grass-roots level — not new bureaucratic superstructures — is what is now required.

The follow-up to the Rio Conference offers some encouragement. Environmental concerns are now part of mainstream thinking on development. As a major forestry nation, Finland wants in particular to make sure that progress on forest issues is made in a solid and balanced manner and on a global scale.

The past five decades have demonstrated to the world that the United Nations is a vital centre for harmonizing actions for the common good. The future will bring new challenges. Let us provide the United Nations with the political support and the financial means that it desperately needs to serve us for the future.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Muhamed Sacirbey.

Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, and wish you success in your new, most historically significant task.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations can be viewed as a time of retirement or as an opportunity for a new beginning and rejuvenation. We all bear a responsibility to maximize the possibility that the United Nations will not only endure the next 50 years but will thrive as the centrepiece of a new world order and international peace and security.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is keenly aware of the pivotal role into which our country has been thrust. It is not a role we sought or one that we cherish. The successful settlement of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, consistent with the principles of sovereignty, democracy and respect for human rights engraved in the United Nations Charter, can be a catalyst for this new beginning for both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Nations. However, a failure to honour basic principles of the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law could be fatal to Bosnia and Herzegovina and threaten the vitality and integrity of the United Nations.

This coming Thursday, we all hope to see another firm stride towards peace in the Middle East. Although much more needs to be done to secure the rights of all in the region and to bring about real stability and therefore true peace, the peace process in the Middle East is anchored by leaders who deserve our respect. They represent peoples who have been long maligned during the recent past. The substantial differences that still exist between these peoples are born out of previous injustices and out of conflicting claims to land.

The war waged upon our country does involve a land grab and an aggression in violation of the United Nations Charter. However, more directly, the war is about ideology — ideology not of religion and ethnicity but of politics and tolerance. We have been the victims of genocide and our enemy is not defined by its ethnicity or religion but by the ideology of intolerance, dictatorship and fascism that it promotes.

I have just come out of the negotiations with the members of the Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina and my two colleagues from Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro. I wish that I could say that I was as confident about the prospects of success with respect to our negotiations as I am for the prospects of the negotiations in the Middle East. While the Middle East negotiations involve statesmen trying to resolve the competing claims of maligned peoples hungry for peace, we find among our negotiating partners at least two individuals already indicted by the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague for genocide and other crimes against humanity. While the international media show pictures of the mass graves of civilians murdered in the campaign of "ethnic cleansing" and genocide that gave the Republika Srpska its very beginning, we are now negotiating with a team that includes the very indicted war criminals responsible for these murders and the mass graves.

We really do hope that this negotiating process will bring about a step towards peace. We have come to the firm understanding that victory can be defined in more than one way. We are not seeking military victory over our enemies, even though our legal and moral status is consistent with absolute military triumph. We have learned to define our victory in terms of the lives that we can save and in the opportunity to rebuild and reinstate throughout our country democracy and human rights. We certainly do not seek revenge for the thousands of persons expelled, tortured, raped and murdered. We only seek not to allow war criminals responsible for these crimes to dictate our future and to seek legitimacy through the negotiating process. We do have confidence that the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague will bring about justice and will certainly know better how to address such war criminals than the negotiators.

We are sincerely committed to, and do believe in, the negotiating process. Negotiations are consistent with our goal, which is to achieve peace, even if we have to make difficult, painful compromises. Through peace we hope to re-establish democracy and respect for human rights throughout the entire country and in that fashion gradually reintegrate our country. It is in many ways a risky and unprecedented road. None the less, we do believe that, in peace, the ideology of an open, free, democratic and tolerant society is strongest, while a closed, totalitarian and intolerant ideology is strengthened by conflict. We do recognize also that there are some legitimate considerations that have to be addressed in the negotiating process, including internal territorial delineations and means to rebuild the confidence of the population in the political processes and mechanisms that are designed to secure respect for human rights.

Our country has been too scarred and too polarized by this war for us to expect that peace and reintegration will not require a special effort and mechanisms that may seem unnatural to many of us. None the less, there still remains a basic contradiction in the existing negotiating process. That is because it is theorized that dictators and despots as negotiators on one side are truly prepared to negotiate to bring about free and fair elections and democratic institutions as the basis for a new Bosnia and Herzegovina.

That is because it is expected that hate mongers on one side are prepared to negotiate the establishment of institutions that in fact ensure respect for basic human rights.

That is because war criminals on one side — the same side — are called upon to negotiate the creation of mechanisms that would facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons, the very victims that these criminals actually subjected to "ethnic cleansing".

I have just come from a set of lengthy and difficult negotiations. The other side continues to refuse to accept the requirement that the future Parliament and Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be elected by direct elections by popular vote.

We are being strongly encouraged — even pressured, if you will — to agree to what may be a process other than election by popular vote as the means by which the future Parliament and Presidency of our country would be selected.

We have already been lectured that the negotiating process would collapse if we persisted in demanding that the extradition of war criminals to The Hague must be honoured by all authorities within the future Bosnia and Herzegovina, as is consistent with international law and the demands of the international community on our country as a whole.

Let us be clear here once and for all on this. We will not settle for sham elections or other selection procedures in respect of our most basic governmental institutions that dictators and despots want in order to undermine real democracy and legitimize totalitarianism under the cover of an international peace agreement.

The other side has been given the opportunity to choose its own negotiating team. But the fact that they have selected members who have already been formally indicted by the War Crimes Tribunal and others who may yet be indicted will not affect our demand that they be extradited to the Tribunal.

The selection of these negotiators is their choice. But let me emphasize once again: we will not allow a negotiating process to shield war criminals from international justice — not our justice, but international justice. In fact, the success of the negotiating process will be measured by whether or not war criminals are brought to justice and by whether despots and dictators are swept out of power, not by the agreements that such criminals and dictators may sign.

Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be either free, fair or democratic until a basic respect for human rights is established, until war criminals are sent for trial to the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, until refugees and displaced persons are guaranteed the right and opportunity to return and to vote in these elections, and until overall conditions are established consistent with a free and open society.

Finally, neither can there be real peace unless an environment consistent with democracy and respect for human rights is promoted by all, including the international community.

Well, what does all this have to do with the United Nations? It certainly has a lot to do with Bosnia and Herzegovina as a Member of the United Nations. Simply put, the United Nations Charter and basic international principles can be overlooked only temporarily. However, the United Nations cannot be the envisioned authority in the preservation of international peace and security if the United Nations Charter is overwhelmingly ignored in establishing the building blocks for peace. This is a universal principle with global application.

As I mentioned, I have just come from the negotiations. I will be going back. We are surprised, we are angry that we have to negotiate over whether or not, in establishing peace and a new beginning in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the other side will be forced to accept direct, free and democratic elections. We are being told that we must accept compromise language that means less than this. If they will not accept the words today, we must be truly suspicious of their longer-term intentions ever to accept real peace and democracy, or whether they in fact just intend to perpetuate their hold on power and domination over an innocent Serb population.

We have already made many painful compromises. We are prepared to make more — many more — in the search for a real peace. However, do not ask us — do not ask yourselves — to settle for concessions to dictatorships, to intolerance, to illegality, to criminality and hate. Do not allow yourselves and us to set aside the most basic principles of the United Nations Charter.

We are prepared to work with all Member States in partnership for that real peace and the necessary compromises that all of us can live with.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, His Excellency Mr. Vahan Papazian.

Mr. Papazian (Armenia): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of this historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Given your talent and experience, I am confident that you will guide this session to the successful completion of the noble mission entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

I should also like to express my appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, for his outstanding leadership in accomplishing the tasks of the last session.

I should like to take this opportunity to extend my warm welcome and congratulations to the Republic of Palau on its admission to the United Nations during the past year.

Further, I wish to express Armenia's gratitude to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the vision with which he has guided the Organization, and for his tireless activity in redefining the role of the United Nations in this changing world.

After its declaration of independence in 1991, Armenia began implementing radical economic and political reforms to create a healthy market economy and a truly democratic society. In addition to severe economic and social problems resulting from the extraordinary changes buffeting the country, the transition process in Armenia has been exacerbated by the collapse of traditional economic and trade arrangements, instability in the region, the transport and energy blockade imposed by neighbouring Azerbaijan, the devastation caused by the massive earthquake of 1988, the conflict between Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the presence of 360,000 refugees.

Despite such serious economic and social circumstances, economic reforms have been continued and even expanded over the last year. From the point of view of current economic trends, 1994 was exceptional. The programme of socio-economic development was aimed at halting economic decline, reducing inflation and creating conditions for the revitalization of the economy. Although the problems specifically related to the transition remain, the measures taken not only have halted the recession but also have provided a measure of economic growth.

Indeed, in 1994 Armenia became the first former Soviet Republic to record economic growth. A tight credit policy has forced down the inflation rate from 30 per cent a month last year to 1 per cent in August. The currency, the Dram, is now one of the strongest in the region. Since mid-1994 a macroeconomic stabilization programme has been under way.

We have maintained a policy of fiscal and monetary responsibility to encourage the development of the private sector. We are also undertaking a mass privatization programme to transfer nearly all State-owned enterprises to private ownership. We believe that the private sector will be the engine of growth in Armenia and an important source of employment opportunity. We welcome the participation of foreign investors in this process without restriction, and we have a completely open foreign trade policy.

Of course implementation of our economic policy has been hampered by the situation in the energy sector, which remains critical. Therefore, the only viable, effective short-term solution to Armenia's energy crisis is the restarting of the Metsamor Nuclear Power plant, which is under way.

Armenia, like other States in transition, is in the process of emerging from economic crisis and of laying the foundations for economic and social development. While States have the primary responsibility to achieve social and economic development, they cannot do so alone. They need the substantial support and encouragement of the international community. Multilateral and bilateral donors should coordinate their financing and planning procedures to improve the impact of their activity toward the achievement of the objectives of social development programmes of countries with economies in transition.

Given its universal membership and the unique and comprehensive mandate reflected in its Charter, the United Nations has a vital role to play in the development process, particularly in ensuring the implementation of development commitments in an integrated fashion. Hence, its relationship with the specialized agencies, funds, regional organizations and commissions, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization should be analysed with a view to enhancing effective action and coordination between them in the economic, social and related fields.

The commitment to the transformation of the centrally planned economy to a market economy is seen by the Government of Armenia as an integral part of the transition to a democratic State. In turn, a free-market economy will flourish in a stable democracy which promotes and underpins economic development. The success of a democracy requires informed and civil discourse and respect for the rule of law and for the democratic process, including the expression of the public view through free and fair elections.

Last July, Armenia held its first democratic parliamentary elections since its declared independence. Simultaneously, Armenians voted in a constitutional referendum on the first democratic institution in the history of Armenia. The Constitution was adopted and the liberal democratic forces gained an overwhelming majority in the new parliament, now renamed the National Assembly. International and local observers reported that the elections ran smoothly and were held in a free atmosphere. I should like to take this opportunity to express my Government's deep appreciation for the monitoring activities of the United Nations observers in the parliamentary elections and the constitutional referendum.

The convincing victory of the liberal democratic forces has guaranteed the continuation of the political and socio-economic policies pursued thus far by the Government, based on a clear programme and an achievable plan of development. The adoption of the Constitution is a decisive factor in the maintenance of the stability of Armenian statehood, as well as the legal guarantee for the development of a civic society and a market economy.

Development and human rights are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. There can be no genuine long-term development without respect for the full spectrum of the rights of individuals. Armenia strongly supports the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Ayala Lasso. Member States must continue working toward better coordination within the Human Rights Centre and consolidation of human rights functions within the United Nations system. The United Nations should give priority to monitoring and prevention.

Armenia considers self-determination in its multitude of manifestations to be an inalienable human right. The conflict between the people of Nagorno Karabakh, who are striving for self-determination, and the Azerbaijani Government, which refuses to address the rights of the people of Nagorno Karabakh, continues to concern the Government of Armenia. The peaceful resolution of the conflict remains Armenia's top foreign policy priority.

Despite the maintenance of the cease-fire since May 1994, the conflict continues to threaten peace, stability and security in our region. The lack of any serious breakthrough in negotiations during this respite, the uncertainties surrounding the political process and the reluctance of the international community to seize the opportunity to act firmly and decisively make the 15-month-long cease-fire highly fragile. Indeed, the longer the cease-fire exists without any major developments, the more likely the resumption of military activity in the near future will become.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, important developments have taken place in the political process. Visible progress was made at the Summit meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) held in Budapest in December 1994, when an agreement was reached at the highest levels to combine the mediation efforts of the OSCE and Russia, and create a co-chairmanship to guide the peace process. The Summit also expressed readiness to establish a multinational OSCE peace-keeping operation to consolidate the existing cease-fire, make the peace process irreversible and open the way for the Minsk Conference.

Today, under Russian and Finn co-chairmanship, and with the participation of nine Minsk Group member States, the OSCE is actively pursuing the peace process through intensive negotiations. While these efforts have certainly yielded results, a demonstration of political will by the parties to the conflict and an added commitment by the international community are needed if a serious breakthrough is to be achieved.

As part of the step-by-step approach to the resolution of the conflict, the signing of the political agreement is critical for the consolidation of the cease-fire and for the overall settlement of the conflict. This political agreement, which is currently, during the Minsk Group negotiations, being discussed by the parties to the conflict, stipulates the deployment of the OSCE peace-keeping forces, the return of the occupied territories, the lifting of all blockades and the return of refugees.

The successful conclusion of this agreement depends mainly on a provision that provides local, regional and international security guarantees that will ensure the physical existence of the people of Nagorno Karabakh, and eliminate the possibility of the resumption of military activities. Such guarantees, along with standard security measures — deployment of OSCE peace-keepers, demilitarization of all evacuated territory, and so on — must also address Nagorno Karabakh's legitimate need, as an indispensable security element, of a corridor linking the enclave with the outside world.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses a grave threat to both global and regional security and stability. At the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties undertook an in-depth and earnest review of the implementation of the Treaty and reached a decision for the Treaty to continue in force indefinitely. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its satisfaction with this historic outcome. Armenia attaches great importance to the early conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty — and no later than 1996.

In recent years the United Nations has convened a series of global conferences. The important process of international gatherings has continued this year. The World Summit for Social Development brought together many strands that had previously been pursued separately. For the first time in history there was a political acknowledgment that the eradication of poverty must be the first priority of any society.

Within each of the United Nations global conferences, the advancement of women has been a major concern, and we have witnessed a number of considerable gains on women's issues. The Fourth Conference on Women, which has just concluded in Beijing, both reaffirms the commitments toward the advancement of women made in the previous conferences and builds upon their achievements.

The Platform of Action agreed upon at the Beijing Conference will lead to the creation of new machinery that will help countries integrate women's issues into national policy-making.

Virtually all Member States of the United Nations favour an increase in the membership of the Security Council reflecting the radical changes in the world and the increase in the Organization's overall membership. However, an increase in membership should not diminish the Council's efficiency. Meanwhile, the Security Council must continue working to improve its openness, transparency and communication with non-members. The Council should also be able to respond to emerging threats and disputes before their escalation into armed conflict.

There is a direct link between peace and security, on the one hand, and economic and social development, on the other. Therefore, radical reform of the Economic and Social Council is imperative. As a first step, strengthening of the Council's policy-setting role and coordination capability in operational activities for development is required. Together with improved coordination of United Nations organizations and agencies devoted to economic and social progress, a strengthened Economic and Social Council could better assist the Security Council and advise it of potential emergencies arising out of economic and social conditions.

The issue of financial resources is fundamental. If Member States wish to have an effective world Organization to meet global challenges, they must pay their assessments, as they are legally committed to do. We are not indifferent to the financial situation of the United Nations, and I would like to assure the Assembly that my country will do its best to fulfil its obligations. However, the current assessment formulas no longer fully reflect global economic and political realities. The High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations was established by the Assembly in part in response to the necessity for revision of the assessment structure. The aim of a comprehensive financial reform must be to establish a transparent and reliable scale, reflective of Members' real capacity to pay, automatically adaptable to changed national circumstances and giving consideration to the needs of countries with low per capita incomes.

Let me conclude by wishing the General Assembly every success in the demanding work it faces during this session, and by pledging Armenia's most active and efficient cooperation with the delegations of other States as you, Sir, preside over our deliberations.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, His Excellency Mr. Jose Manuel Durão Barroso, on whom I now call.

Mr. Durão Barroso (Portugal) *(spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation):* It will doubtless be understood if, before beginning my statement, I express, as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, the particular satisfaction which I feel in seeing an illustrious fellow countryman, Professor Diogo Freitas do Amaral, an eminent public figure and a professor at my alma mater, the University of Lisbon, presiding over the work of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Allow me to convey my warmest and fondest congratulations to you, Mr. President, and, at the same time, my gratitude to all Member States for the vote of confidence in Portugal that this represents.

I would also like to pay tribute to my colleague from Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Amara Essy, for the dedicated and competent manner in which he steered the work of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

To you, Mr. Secretary-General, I reaffirm my admiration for the way in which you have carried out your functions during a period in which the United Nations is increasingly called upon to intervene ever more actively in many fields of international life.

In his statement, my Spanish colleague has already set out, in the name of the 15 States of the European Union, certain positions which are also shared by Portugal. Nevertheless, I would like to refer to some matters which are of particular importance to my country.

Peace continues to be the primary objective of, and the biggest challenge faced by, the United Nations.

The proliferation of peace-keeping operations launched by the Security Council in recent years and the high levels of human and financial resources committed to them are indicative of the commitment and collective efforts of the United Nations system and its Member States.

The results achieved in some countries — and I am pleased to refer here to the case of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and the recent developments in the peace process in Angola — are reason enough to indicate that we should not reduce our level of commitment nor the scope of our activities. We should, however, also be flexible and creative, here as elsewhere, in order to avoid the rigidity of models and adapt peace-keeping operations to the specific conditions of each case.

While it is true that the United Nations must not abdicate its mission of helping to restore peace, we believe that we should focus our efforts, above all, on the prevention of conflicts.

The Agenda for Peace requires effective coordination of the various Departments and agencies of the United Nations system in order to provide an integrated view of the many factors which contribute to the development of crises. In the search for peace, the question of the complementarity between the United Nations and intergovernmental organizations of a regional nature is also particularly relevant.

With this in mind, Portugal has actively supported, since the beginning, the creation and implementation of the mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution established by the Organization of African

Unity (OAU) at the Cairo Summit in 1993. We have also participated in the search for the means which will permit the strengthening and efficacy of those instruments.

Along the same lines, while holding the presidency of the Western European Union (WEU) during the first half of this year, Portugal put the issue of conflict prevention on the agenda of that organization and focused the need for WEU to develop support mechanisms in this regard.

Also, in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), where preventive diplomacy is the foundation of its activities, Portugal has contributed so that the Organization can continue to have a decisive role to play in the maintenance of stability in a region which runs from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Alongside the security model for the twenty-first century, this will surely be one of the subjects that will receive in-depth treatment at the next OSCE Summit, which will take place in Lisbon at the end of next year.

With regard to disarmament, as another of the components of the efforts in favour of peace, Portugal welcomes the historic decision taken by consensus on 11 May this year in this very Hall to indefinitely extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Also encouraging is the progress obtained at the Disarmament Conference, especially with regard to the increased expectations of rapidly completing a comprehensive test ban Treaty.

The results of the high-level meeting, held last July, that resulted in donations towards a voluntary United Nations fund for de-mining should also be stressed here. In that context, Portugal announced that it would be making a bilateral contribution.

Equally, I welcome the negotiations currently under way in Vienna for the revision of the United Nations Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The enlargement of the Disarmament Conference is urgently required, keeping in mind the need for a strengthening of the negotiation of international legal instruments, as well as their observance by an increasing number of States.

There can be no peace in the world while large sections of the world's population continue to live beneath levels considered fundamental for human dignity. Integrated and sustainable development, focused on people, is therefore the other great challenge which cannot be separated from the search for peace. The Agenda for Development and the Agenda for Peace constitute a single unit — one makes no sense, nor can it be achieved, without the other.

In this context, it is necessary to recognize the need to revise the entire system of international development aid, and to reflect on the role that, in this area, should fall to the United Nations. Ours should be a global and coherent vision.

The integrated and sustainable development which we desire must be pursued on all fronts: at the economic level, to be sure, but also in the consolidation and deepening of democratic institutions; in the promotion of human rights across the board; in the increasing participation of women in the most diverse sectors of social and political life; in the defence of the rights of children, ethnic minorities and all underprivileged members of society; in humanitarian assistance; and in the protection of the environment.

To achieve all these goals, we must implement the decisions taken at major United Nations conferences, for it is at these conferences — those of Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing, as well as the forthcoming conference in Istanbul next year — that the "Agenda for Development" gradually takes shape.

Non-governmental organizations, as well as other groups through which the vitality of civil society is demonstrated, are privileged agents in aid and development, and are our partners in the "Agenda for Development". This is due to their particular capacity of penetration in the field, of making contact with the people and of understanding their real needs.

Of all areas of development, there are two in particular to which I would like now to turn: the protection and promotion of human rights, and the importance of the environment.

The protection and promotion of human rights is a constant priority of Portuguese foreign policy. We continue to believe in the importance of critical dialogue in order to reach the fundamental objective of respect for those rights, and we are following the activities of the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights.

The fact that protection of the environment is inextricably linked to the notion of balanced development has led it to gain an increasing relevancy in our foreign policy concerns. In this context, I wish to refer in particular to the oceans, especially with regard to the development of a balanced management of fish stocks and marine resources.

As Portugal's territory includes two archipelagos — the Azores and Madeira — I would like to stress our particular sensitivity to the problems faced by small island States in development and environmental issues.

Furthermore, I express my hope that the International Year of the Oceans, a Portuguese initiative adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, will provide an urgently needed opportunity for a full debate on these questions. We will strive in that direction and hope that the holding in the same year in Lisbon of Expo 98 — an exposition on that subject — will result in a fruitful coordination of these efforts.

The legislative activity of the United Nations in maintaining the ecological balance and the management of international waterways is of special importance. Portugal intends to follow with particular interest the work on this issue that is being undertaken by the International Law Commission. We hope that in the near future a convention on this matter will be adopted which would include international norms of responsibility — applicable under domestic or international jurisdiction.

In the context of an "agenda for development", I would like once again, to underline my personal conviction and the position of Portugal that Africa must quite obviously be one of the priorities of the international community. We were therefore pleased to welcome the announcement made by the Secretary-General in Lisbon concerning the launching of the "United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s".

The forthcoming conference for the Great Lakes region, convened under the sponsorship of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to address the tragic situation of a number of countries of that region, will certainly constitute a test of the true commitment of the international community to the African continent: a test of the capacity to identify the objectives of peace and development; a test of the much-needed complementarity between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Despite the persistence of disturbing cases of political and social instability in a number of countries of the continent, as well as, of course, the open conflicts and serious violations of human rights which still continue, it is only fair to recognize that in many African States significant steps have been taken towards the peaceful settlement of conflicts and the consolidation of the processes of political and social democratization.

I am pleased to be able to say that the majority of these processes were carried out under the aegis of the United Nations, and Portugal is proud to have actively participated in a number of them: in the international structures of support to the process of democratic transition in South Africa; in the negotiations which led to the Peace Accord in Mozambique, having been represented in all the commissions created by that Accord and in the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ); and as part of the troika of observers of the peace process in Angola.

With this process in mind, I hope that, following the meetings held at Lusaka, Franceville, and now Brussels, between the President of the Republic of Angola and the leader of UNITA, steps will continue to be taken towards a definitive reconciliation of the Angolan family while strictly complying with the Lusaka Protocol, which restores the spirit of the Bicesse Agreement signed in Portugal in 1991.

It is equally important, keeping in mind Security Council resolution 1008 (1995), Lusaka Protocol be adequately encouraged by the international community. I cannot fail, therefore, to express my concern over the delay in the deployment to Angola of all the forces and contingents of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), where Portugal is already present with a communications and logistics unit, as well as a number of staff officers in the command structure and civilian, military and police observers.

The tragic human suffering and the terrible material destruction brought about by more than 20 years of conflict also require that the international community — following the round table on Angola being held in Brussels under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme — continues to respond generously to the humanitarian aid needs and the challenge of reconstructing the country, particularly in the areas of demining and the social reintegration of the displaced and the demobilized.

The New Agenda for Africa is pressing. It should lead to the promotion of vast integrated programmes of development aid which would coordinate, in the most efficient manner possible, the resources of the international community. It should seek to support and encourage African countries to choose the path of peace, political democracy, stability and social justice, respect for human rights and economic development.

The strengthening of the ties which link Portugal to the five Portuguese speaking countries is and shall remain a constant goal of my country's foreign policy.

While talking of the ties that unite the countries that speak Portuguese, I wish to underline the importance of the meeting which, last July in Lisbon, brought together the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, and Sao Tome and Principe.

That meeting permitted the reaffirmation of purpose which motivates those respective Governments with regard to the institutionalization of the community of Portuguese speaking countries. We hope that this next year will witness the formalization of this community, which, to all intents and purposes, already exists in the hearts and souls of its peoples and has become more and more concrete in many ways.

At a time such as this, when we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and assessing its successes and its failures, we cannot but, unfortunately, include the question of East Timor among the latter.

The 20 years which have passed since the illegal occupation of East Timor and the denial of the exercise of the right to self-determination of its people, far from allowing the question to be forgotten and the status quo to be consolidated have, on the contrary, worsened the tensions and focused ever more strongly the attention of world public opinion.

The lesson of these last 20 years has been that force solves nothing in East Timor nor will it ever resolve anything. Without a solution which, in conformity with the Charter and international law, takes into account the legitimate rights of its people, including that of freely expressing themselves on their political future, there will be no peace or respect for human rights in East Timor.

I wish to reiterate here the commitment of Portugal towards finding, through peaceful and negotiated means, such a solution. With that aim in mind, we continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General in the process of dialogue which, under his auspices, we have maintained with Indonesia.

Despite the fundamental difference which continues to separate us on the core of the problem, we believe that the process of dialogue, with all its difficulties, registered very significant progress: representative Timorese personalities from various political sectors have now become associated with this process.

We have always held that the rights and primary interests at stake in this question are those of the Timorese people, and that their voice and their wishes will have to be heard in order for a solution to be found. I sincerely hope that this first step marks the beginning of a new, more positive and constructive phase of the process of dialogue concerning East Timor, one which will lead us more quickly to the end of this tragic situation.

I turn now to Europe. The situation in the former Yugoslavia continues to be a principal motive of concern. We are naturally encouraged by the results obtained at the Ministerial meeting held in Geneva on 8 September, congratulate the members of the Contact Group for obtaining those results and hope that the meeting being held here today in New York will drive the process forward. At any rate, the consolidation of the results still depends on keeping the international community united, on the cohesion of the Contact Group, and on close coordination of the initiatives and actions taken by international organizations. Portugal will continue to participate actively in these efforts and we shall maintain our presence on the ground while it remains useful and necessary.

In its relationship with Latin America, Portugal has, as is well known, very strong human, historical and cultural ties: with Brazil, for reasons known to all, but also with the other countries of Latin America, with which we are seeking an ever-closer relationship. Ties with Latin America will always occupy an important place in Portuguese foreign policy. This is made clear by our active participation in the Ibero-American Summits of Heads of State and Government.

We welcome the fact that Latin America is today clearly giving new value to its role in the international system. Portugal resolutely supports the projects for regional Latin American integration and, as a member of the European Union, favours the establishment of wide agreements with institutions of regional integration —

namely, the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUL) and other processes of integration under way on the American continent. I am referring also to the consolidation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the future establishment of a free-trade area in the Americas.

Portugal, both bilaterally and within the framework of a number of organizations such as the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union, has promoted the strengthening and deepening of ties with the countries of the Maghreb, a region of fundamental importance today for the security, stability and development of the entire Mediterranean area.

Therefore, a number of European Councils, beginning with that of Lisbon, have detailed new ideas and new instruments of partnership that relate to a number of areas and that will bring closer together the two shores of the Mediterranean; they will be decided upon at the forthcoming Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona in November.

Portugal continues to follow closely the progress reached in the Middle East peace process, especially as regards the negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. We must pay tribute here to the courage with which both sides have pursued the path of peace; they have frequently encountered obstacles — sometimes tragic ones — but they have not remained hostage to them. Proof of this is the important accord to be solemnly signed in Washington in just a few days. I hope that this atmosphere of dialogue will also be consolidated among the other parties.

Portugal, both within the European Union and bilaterally, has contributed to the assistance for the Palestinian people and for the support of its structures.

Turning to Asia, I must first mention with satisfaction that, as a result of the close cooperation between Portugal and China and in full respect for the joint declaration between those two countries, the process of Macau's transition continues to be carried out in a harmonious manner. The common objective of both countries in this process remains constant: to guarantee the stability and prosperity of that territory and the maintenance of its special characteristics, in the framework of the transfer of administration in December 1999.

Portugal recognizes the increasing importance that the Asian continent is assuming on the international stage. My country feels that it has profound historical and cultural ties to that region. In this context, my Government hopes that the meeting planned for next March in Bangkok will constitute a significant step towards an ever-more-open and wider dialogue on all questions of mutual interest to the European Union and Asia.

To achieve the fundamental and primary goals of peace and development, and to face the situations I have referred to, the Organization must undertake a realistic exercise of self- examination.

It is, above all, essential for the Organization to have a sound financial foundation. I do not believe I am exaggerating by stating that we are in the midst of a crisis that is without precedent and that, if not promptly and bravely addressed, will surely lead the Organization to rupture. At this point, two stages appear available to us in the search for a solution: strict payment in full and on time of our obligations; the need for corrections which will permit a reduction of expenses or their fairer distribution amongst us.

With regard to the first point, I cannot avoid criticizing the attempts to renege on commitments which have already been made, by consensus. How can an expense be adopted by consensus but its payment refused? What kind of credibility can then be expected in what concerns international commitments?

As to the second aspect, reforms are necessary that will reflect each State's capacity to pay and the alterations to that capacity. In this spirit, my Government, responding to an appeal made by the Secretary-General, took the initiative earlier this year to increase voluntarily its contributions to the peace-keeping budget. Thus we have moved from group C to group B on the scale of assessments. The decision will mean a five-fold increase in our initial contributions. We took this decision because we consider that it is a step in the right direction in what concerns the financial reform of the Organization. We took this decision to express our commitment to the importance and success of the work of this Organization. We took this decision because we knew this increase might benefit other countries that are experiencing temporary difficulties. We hope that our move will be followed by other States whose economic situation has, like Portugal's, improved in recent years.

It is not merely in the financial area that the United Nations must contemplate reform. Equally important is the reform of the Security Council, which must in the near future reflect the political, economic and demographic realities of the contemporary world. In this context, an adequate and balanced representation of all regions of the world would confer on the Council greater efficacy in the formulation and implementation of its decisions and would make it the beneficiary of wide support from all Member States, which would, in this manner, feel duly represented on it. It is undoubtedly a complex process, an evolutionary one, in which differences remain profound and which will necessarily be based on a compromise solution.

I cannot conclude without reaffirming here the candidature of Portugal for one of the two non-permanent seats on the Security Council attributed to the Western European Group for the period 1996 through 1997. Our candidature is based on a number of reasons.

First, because we believe, as a country with a universalist nature accustomed to contact with all regions of the globe for more than five centuries and to understanding and accepting different cultures and civilizations, that we will be able to contribute to the search for solutions in strict compliance with the purposes and principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

Secondly, having been only once before a member of the Security Council, we understand that countries like Portugal have not only the right, but also the duty, to participate in that body more regularly.

In this context, I would like to underline here the situation of countries like Portugal — in fact, the majority of those represented here — that, based on democratic principles such as that of rotation, can, wish to, and should be able to, contribute to international peace and security. And this they can do in a particularly constructive manner, as, by not pursuing geo-strategic interests of hegemonic regional promotion or of any other type, they can, on the contrary, contribute by being accessible, available and moderate in the search for compromise solutions.

On the other hand, through our participation in peace-keeping operations, our voluntary increase of our financial contributions to the Organization, our participation in important United Nations organs, we consider that we are ready to carry out the role which we may be called upon to play.

We are ready to listen and not to impose. We place our trust in negotiation and not on pressure; we support what is fair and balanced, and do not consider any formula which does not seek to build bridges for the creation of consensus solutions.

In candidatures such as this, to achieve the goals set out, some are tempted to adopt attitudes which are of great visibility, but which are of a merely superficial nature. Others are tempted also to promise that which is quickly forgotten, or even to make commitments which in the end are unfulfilled.

On our part, we prefer to rely on the inherent merits of our candidature and, in this context, to actively pursue in a committed manner, the defence of our positions, ideas and proposals.

We believe, therefore, in the support and warm welcome that the candidature of Portugal for the Security Council will receive in the elections to take place during the next session of the General Assembly.

Next month we will celebrate at the highest level, in a solemn session, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which will provide an opportunity for reflection on the future of this Organization. Portugal hopes that a strengthened determination of all Member States will emerge to reaffirm the principles and values of the Charter and result in the better adaption of the Organization to the complex realities of international life today.

This is certainly a great challenge. New generations hope that we will be able to face these responsibilities.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.7

General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

7th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 26 September 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Diogo FREITAS do AMARAL . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: The first speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, His Excellency Mr. Yohei Kono, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kono (Japan) *(spoke in Japanese; English text furnished by the delegation):* I should like, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to begin my statement at the General Assembly by extending my felicitations on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I also wish to offer my sincere congratulations to Your Excellency, Professor Freitas do Amaral, on your assumption of the presidency of this commemorative session of the General Assembly.

Half a century has passed since the United Nations was founded. When we recall that its predecessor, the League of Nations, endured for just a little over 20 years, we should consider the very longevity of this Organization a blessing. But that is not the end of the story. As we look ahead to the future, the mission of the United Nations will become increasingly important. I am thus particularly moved to have been given the honour and privilege of representing the Government of Japan at this historic and significant session of the General Assembly.

Although during the past 50 years confrontation between the super-Powers at times paralysed the peace-keeping functions of the United Nations, the structure of the international community has recently undergone tremendous change. Within this span of time, the world population has more than doubled, and this explosive increase has resulted in serious problems on a global scale. Moreover, with the rapid proliferation of regional conflicts in the years since the end of the cold war, there are an estimated 30 million refugees in the world today. And, as Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali pointed out in his recent statement in Geneva, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, 1.3 billion people are living in absolute poverty and more than 1.5 billion do not receive even the most basic health care. Needless to say, there remain the increasingly grave problems of environmental degradation, including global warming, deforestation and marine pollution.

The United Nations is the only universal international organization that exists to cope with these grave problems to ensure that the international community enjoys peace and prosperity. Thus it is necessary at this time for the United Nations genuinely to strengthen its functions and to take concrete action for reforms in the financial, economic and social, and political fields. Cooperation with the United Nations has always been an important pillar of Japan's foreign policy. I should like at the outset to state that Japan is resolved hereafter to strengthen further such cooperation and to contribute actively to the strengthening of the Organization's functions.

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The first point I wish to make with regard to the crucially important international challenges in this new post-cold-war era is that the development of developing countries should be pursued from a new perspective. The achievement of greater economic self-reliance by developing countries through development is conducive to the growth of the global economy as a whole and will, in turn, help stabilize the new international order.

Development issues have until now tended to become politicized in the context of East-West confrontation and have not been addressed from the essential perspective of development. Today, however, an environment is emerging in which the problems of the economic and social development of developing countries can be squarely addressed from a perspective of cooperation and partnership. On this occasion, I should like to reaffirm the need to formulate a more comprehensive development strategy for achieving peace and prosperity throughout the international community.

In addressing development issues, I believe that official development assistance will continue to play an important role. Japan, recalling the assistance it received from other countries in the past, and now as the world's largest aid donor, will continue its efforts to expand its official development assistance.

On the other hand, however, the development strategy that we are to pursue hereafter cannot be concerned simply with development assistance. For example, when one considers the extraordinary economic performance of the East Asia region, one cannot but clearly recognize the importance of fostering the market mechanism and of promoting the liberalization of trade and investment. I should also like to emphasize once again the need to maintain and strengthen the multilateral open-trading system, at the centre of which is the World Trade Organization, established earlier this year.

In this connection, I wish to refer to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) as a good example of open regional cooperation that rejects exclusive regionalism. As the presiding nation at this year's APEC conference, to be held in Osaka in November, Japan intends to contribute actively to the further promotion of such regional cooperation under APEC.

The concept of social development is increasingly important in ensuring that economic development and growth will lead to the enhancement of individual welfare and the security and prosperity of society as a whole through the promotion of education and training, respect for human rights and the advancement of the status of women. Japan is working to enhance its international cooperation in all of these areas. It attaches particular importance to the role of women in development and thus, at the recent Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, it announced a new policy to expand its development assistance in the three priority areas of raising the educational standards, improving the health and promoting the economic and social participation of women.

In the formulation of the new development strategy which I proposed earlier, a comprehensive approach is needed. Such an approach would include not only official development assistance, but a variety of policy measures in such areas as trade, investment, macroeconomic policies, technology transfer and building social infrastructure. In addition, it is also important to take a differentiated approach which applies the best policy mix according to the respective country's stage of development.

Based on this fundamental philosophy, I should like to present the following three concrete guidelines.

First, realistic development targets which clearly indicate the anticipated results of development should be established, and developing countries and donor countries should work together to achieve those targets. I should like, for example, to propose that the United Nations, with the cooperation of such bodies as the United Nations University, undertake a study to establish development targets. These targets would combine indices measuring the economic growth of a developing country by, for example, an increase of its gross national product to a fixed level within a certain time-frame, with indices showing the degree of social development according to, among other things, literacy and infant mortality rates.

Secondly, it is important to promote participatory development that involves, in addition to central Governments, new development actors such as non-governmental organizations and local governments.

Thirdly, South-South cooperation should be further promoted. I would propose that necessary financial measures be considered, including the establishment of an effective mechanism for this purpose within the United Nations Development Programme.

While there is a diminished likelihood of a large-scale confrontation or conflict between nations today, as compared with the cold-war era, regional conflicts which stem from religious or ethnic rivalries are of increasingly serious concern. Because poverty is in many cases a cause of these conflicts, it is essential that development issues be urgently addressed. At the same time, it is also the case that a conflict itself poses a major obstacle to the achievement of development, resulting in a vicious circle.

The efforts of the countries concerned, as well as those of other countries in the region, are, of course, basic to the settlement of regional conflicts. But, in addition, the international community too must seriously address itself to the resolution of conflicts, and for this purpose the functions of the United Nations should be strengthened.

Peace-keeping operations, building upon the efforts of the parties concerned, are an effective means of helping to settle disputes. Their deployment can also play an important role in preventing conflicts. It is thus essential that the international community continue to support such operations and work for their further reform. Japan actively cooperates with United Nations peace-keeping operations and intends to participate in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights. Moreover, responding to the rapidly expanding refugee problems resulting from these numerous conflicts, Japan continues to support the activities of such organs as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

It is also important that the United Nations, as well as its Member States, place greater emphasis on conflict prevention. Japan supports the strengthening of United Nations efforts in the area of preventive diplomacy, including the dispatch of fact-finding missions and the offer of political support through its good offices or mediation efforts.

It is for the purpose of promoting conflict prevention and settlement that Japan, with the United Nations and the United Nations University, is co-sponsoring the High-Level Symposium on Peace and Development: Problems of Conflict in Africa, which will be convened next month.

Of all the regional disputes being witnessed in the world today, particular reference should be made to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Peace will not be achieved in that conflict through the use of force by the parties concerned; it must be sought through negotiation. And now there is a window of opportunity for the parties to engage in peace talks. It is essential that that opportunity not be lost but that all concerned spare no effort to achieve peace. Japan continues to support the efforts towards peace being made by the countries concerned as well as the activities of the United Nations. It is also extending appropriate cooperation, including humanitarian assistance. Once the conflict is brought to an end and peace is restored, Japan intends to cooperate in the rehabilitation of the region in conjunction with other concerned countries and relevant international organizations.

I turn now to the situation in the Middle East. Japan has been actively contributing to efforts towards a peaceful settlement. Japan welcomes the agreement reached on 24 September in the negotiations on the expansion of Palestinian interim self-rule and believes it will be a major step forward in the peace process.

Promoting disarmament and strengthening the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are essential to the maintenance of international peace and stability. As countries curtail excessive military spending through arms-reduction efforts, the resources thus saved can be allocated to development objectives. Conversely, progress in economic development must not lead to arms build-ups, and for this reason too it is necessary to redouble disarmament efforts.

In this year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan welcomed the decision to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is an important contribution to strengthening the basis of the non-proliferation regime and represents significant progress towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

As an important step towards nuclear disarmament, renewed efforts should be made to complete negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty by next spring and to sign it by the autumn of 1996, at the latest. Japan, with firm political will and together with other countries, will do its utmost to attain this crucially important goal. As for the scope of the treaty's provisions against nuclear testing, we deeply appreciate the announcements made by France, the United States and the United Kingdom indicating their support for a total ban on all nuclear testing and we hope that the other nuclear-weapon States will likewise adopt that position without delay. I should like to reiterate here the proposal which I made in my address to this body last year that, once the treaty is concluded, the signing ceremony be held in Japan.

I cannot but deeply deplore the nuclear tests conducted by certain countries immediately after the indefinite extension of the NPT was approved unanimously by the States Parties to the Treaty and just as the international community has begun to make further progress towards a nuclear-free world. I should like on this occasion to reaffirm that the nuclear-weapon States, which are accorded a special status under the NPT, have an obligation to respond to the trust shown in them by non-nuclear-weapon States by engaging in genuine nuclear-disarmament efforts. Japan has consistently called for the cessation of nuclear testing and at this session of the General Assembly intends to sponsor a draft resolution calling for the cessation of nuclear testing. I hope that it receives the support and cooperation of all Member States.

In addition, I would appeal to all States to work vigorously for the reduction and control of conventional weapons. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the purpose of which is to enhance the transparency of arms transfers, has proved a great success, recording more than 90 per cent of the transfers of conventional weapons that have taken place throughout the world. I strongly encourage many more States to participate in the Register. The prompt establishment of an international mechanism for controlling the export of conventional weapons is also an important issue.

The problem of uncleared land-mines is not only a humanitarian issue but one that poses a serious obstacle to economic rehabilitation. International cooperation and the development of technology for clearing these mines are urgently required. As we look to the future, it is equally important to consider and strengthen the framework of international regulations with respect to the use, production, transfer and so on of anti-personnel land-mines.

Another serious problem facing the international community is that of the proliferation of small arms. It is Japan's intention to submit to the General Assembly at this session a draft resolution on the establishment, under the Secretary-General, of a panel of experts to address this issue.

As I stated at the beginning of my remarks, we should seize the historic opportunity presented by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to realize concrete reforms aimed at strengthening the functions of the Organization, the importance of which continues to grow. I should like on this occasion to present my views concerning reforms to be undertaken in three areas, namely, financial reform, reforms in the economic and social fields and reform of the Security Council.

Unless the efficiency of its bodies is enhanced and its financial base is made sound and strong, a genuine strengthening of the functions of the United Nations will not be achieved. At present the unpaid contributions of Member States to the United Nations amount to well over US$ 3 billion. It is imperative that we as Member States recognize this situation as an impending crisis and face up to it. I call upon all Member States to make every effort to pay in full and as soon as possible their assessed contributions that are in arrears. At the same time I should like to stress the need for a comprehensive review of the method by which the financial burden is shared among Member States, in a manner that does not place excessive burdens on any of them. As the second-largest contributor to the United Nations, Japan, despite its severe financial situation, has assumed considerable responsible for United Nations financing. On this occasion I wish to emphasize that serious discussion of the fundamental reform of United Nations financing and the realization of a fair and equitable system of burden-sharing are key to the strengthening of the functions of the United Nations.

Now, with the situation more conducive to addressing development issues from a new perspective, it is imperative that we tackle global issues more effectively, particularly those relating to the environment, but also human rights, refugees, population, AIDS and narcotics.

In so doing we must work with greater earnestness to strengthen the United Nations system in economic and social fields. Specifically, it is necessary to improve the efficiency and review the mandates of the various organizations and agencies active in these fields and to promote more effective coordination between them, including international financial institutions.

From this point of view, Japan attaches great importance to the discussion on "An Agenda for Development", and by contributing actively to that discussion it is endeavouring to promote reform in economic and social fields. In particular, there is an urgent need to revitalize the functions of the Economic and Social Council, including the further utilization of its various functional committees.

The reform of the Security Council is of the utmost importance in strengthening the United Nations in the political field. The primary objective of Security Council reform is to strengthen its function by enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness. Towards this end, Japan believes it is necessary to expand the Security Council by adding to its permanent membership countries in a position to assume global responsibilities, and also to increase by an appropriate number the non-permanent membership.

As I stated here last year, Japan, with the endorsement of many countries, is prepared to discharge its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council, in accordance with its basic philosophy regarding international contributions, including the non-resort to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution. On this point, I should like to take this opportunity once again to express my appreciation to the many countries that have indicated their support for Japan's permanent membership on the Security Council.

Building on the results of the discussions conducted in the Working Group over the past two years, particularly on the substantive progress made during the last session of the General Assembly, and also taking advantage of the momentum provided by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, I would urge all Member States to redouble their efforts to reach an agreement on a broad framework for reform by the end of the current session, in September 1996.

This year, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Japan has looked squarely at its past history and has renewed its commitment to peace. Japan is among the countries that have benefited most from the peace and stability of the international community over the past 50 years. I earnestly hope that other countries throughout the world will likewise enjoy the blessings that have accrued to Japan as a result of international peace and prosperity.

I should like to conclude my statement today by reaffirming Japan's determination to contribute to the best of its ability to the building of a stronger United Nations for the future, as well as to establishing a new international order for peace and prosperity based upon the principles of freedom and democracy.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, His Excellency the Honourable André Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet (Canada): It is a great honour to represent Canada here today as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations during this general debate.

Canada has always been among the strongest supporters of the United Nations, not only in word but also in deed. In 1945 we were, through Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King, an original signatory of the United Nations Charter. Ambassador John Humphreys helped write the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Successive Canadian Ambassadors to the United Nations have distinguished themselves in the service of the Organization, as have countless Canadian negotiators in areas ranging from disarmament to trade to development. In addition, Lester B. Pearson won a Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution to the success of the United Nations in establishing the first peace-keeping operation, in 1956.

All these Canadians had a unifying purpose: to promote progress in implementing the United Nations Charter, which enshrines the commitment of the people of the United Nations to the advancement of humanity.

Of course, there have been criticisms of the Organization; many are legitimate and require attention. It is clear, however, that the international community remains committed to the goals of the Charter and to the United Nations as the primary instrument for global problem solving.

The United Nations deserves our continued support. If we look at the record of just the last few years, the United Nations has conducted successful peace-keeping operations in Cambodia, Mozambique and Haiti. Thanks to the United Nations, in this decade alone 5 million children will grow up normally, children who would otherwise have been paralysed by polio. This year the United Nations is working, as it does every year, to ensure a better life for the almost 23 million refugees in the world.

Global resolve to support the United Nations and to advance the interests of the international community has recently been underscored by such successes as the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the Halifax Summit in June, chaired by our Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, the P-8 (Political Eight) leaders reaffirmed their strong commitment to the United Nations system of international institutions and added their ideas for revitalizing it.

The central message is clear: we must take this momentous opportunity to confirm and renew our commitment to the United Nations. To do so, we require a renewed vision for the next 50 years. This vision must be centred on not just striving for, but achieving, human security on the basis of the freedom of people everywhere to live in peace and without fear, to be prosperous and enjoy equality, justice before the law and knowledge. The Members of the United Nations must work together now to renew the Organization and its agencies and programmes and to help make this vision a reality.

In Canada's view pursuing this vision requires a focus on three interlinked objectives: preventing conflict; responding quickly when conflict occurs; and supporting peace-building efforts on an ongoing basis. I will address each objective in turn.

(spoke in French)

The first priority must be to help the United Nations better protect people from conflict. The United Nations has had important successes in the past few years but, unfortunately, there have also been set-backs. If the United Nations is to adapt to a changing world, if confidence in the Organization is to be restored, we must learn from the failures of Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda and build on the successes of Cambodia, Namibia and El Salvador.

Preventive action, as the Secretary-General has laid out so well in "An Agenda for Peace", takes many forms, from economic development programmes to mediation, to the preventive deployment of personnel — as, for example, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia — from the investigation of human rights violations to the conclusion of agreements limiting the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Prevention saves lives, forestalls untold human suffering and makes the best use of limited resources.

Last year I announced at this podium that Canada was providing a list of Canadian experts available to the United Nations for preventive diplomacy missions. We are also taking advantage of our membership in La Francophonie, in the Commonwealth and in regional organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) precisely in order to work towards enhancing the ability of these organizations to prevent conflicts. Our Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, is currently pressing for an expanded Commonwealth role in democratization and good governance, which are two key elements of conflict prevention. I recently convened a meeting of La Francophonie in Ottawa to generate recommendations for it to strengthen its role in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. These recommendations will be presented to the leaders, the Heads of State and Government, gathered at the Francophone Summit to be held in Cotonou, Benin, in December of this year.

Prevention also means deterring crimes against humanity. Canada strongly supports the early establishment of an international criminal court, which will, we hope, deter such crimes in the future but, should they occur, would punish the perpetrators. The recently approved Platform for Action at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing lends further impetus in this area.

Our recent experiences in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda emphasize the link between security and human rights. The United Nations many human rights mechanisms produce a wealth of information that could help us identify and understand potential areas of conflict. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has a role to play in enhancing the early warning functions of the United Nations. The experience of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda revealed the need for the more effective coordination of United Nations field missions. Canada has commissioned work on the human rights components of field operations and on stand-by arrangements for them. This work will yield recommendations on ways to integrate human rights into United Nations field operations, in a way consistent with the approach outlined in "An Agenda for Peace".

One of the priorities of Canada's foreign policy and one of the best ways to renew commitment to the United Nations consists of adopting a coherent approach to the prevention and management of complex emergencies. Averting crisis requires more flexibility and speed in decision-making and in implementation. In this regard Canada supports the proposal for a conference on security, stability and development in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. We also reaffirm our strong support for the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

(spoke in English)

Another major focus of Canada's preventive action is arms control and disarmament, especially concerning nuclear weapons. The historic decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

(NPT) indefinitely provides a foundation for further important gains on nuclear disarmament. We must now complete the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations as early as possible in 1996 in order to permit its signature at the General Assembly next September. An agreement to begin negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons is currently held up. We squander such opportunities at our peril. Canada calls on all members of the Conference on Disarmament to proceed urgently with the cut-off negotiations.

Regrettably our efforts to take preventive action are eroded by the continued global imbalance between spending on armaments and spending on human development. Multilateral institutions should take trends in military and other unproductive spending into consideration. All States Members of the United Nations should comply with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms which will, we hope, be expanded soon to include military holdings and national procurement activities. Together, interested countries could develop criteria to identify excessive military expenditures and appropriate international responses. Canada has taken some initiatives in this regard in recent months and we look forward to productive negotiations with many Member States here.

When a United Nations preventive diplomacy operation stumbles and efforts to prevent conflict fail, Member States all too often criticize the United Nations. But much of the blame for the failures of the Organization lies with the Member States themselves who do not provide it with the tools needed for success. These tools are never needed more than when a crisis erupts.

Last year I discussed the problems the United Nations has encountered in mobilizing its peace operations to respond to crises. Canada's long experience with peacekeeping has convinced us that improvements are possible. The international community's slow response to the horrible and deeply distressing events in Rwanda was very much in our mind. It was in this context that I announced that Canada would examine ways to improve the capacity of the United Nations to react quickly to such events.

Today I have the honour of presenting to the Assembly Canada's report entitled "Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations" as a special Canadian contribution to the United Nations during its fiftieth anniversary year. It presents practical proposals for enhancing the United Nations rapid reaction capability in the field of peace operations. I believe the proposals will both help save lives and conserve scarce resources.

The report expresses the view of the Government of Canada, but considerable care was taken to consult with other Governments, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental institutions. We are also deeply grateful to the many experts from many countries who have lent us their time and wisdom.

The main proposal of the report is the "Vanguard Concept". This concept will permit the United Nations to assemble, from Member States, a multifunctional force of up to 5,000 military and civilian personnel, and, with the authorization of the Security Council, quickly deploy it under the control of an operational-level headquarters. This operational headquarters would be responsible for the advance preparations that are crucial if rapid reaction is to work. Forces will be provided under enhanced stand-by arrangements with Member States. Our other proposals seek to enhance training, to create more efficient logistics and transportation, and to strengthen the planning efforts of the entire United Nations system. Let me say that none of the 26 recommendations in the report requires Charter reforms.

But the search for immediate, practical solutions must not preclude more visionary possibilities. In this regard, the report looked at longer-term questions, such as advanced technology in support of the United Nations peace operations, the feasibility of a permanent group of civilian police, the idea of a United Nations Standing Emergency Group, a permanent force as has been considered by our colleague from the Netherlands; and the question of independent sources of revenue for the United Nations system.

(*spoke in French*)

I believe that the recommendations in the report, if implemented, will strengthen the United Nations capacity for more rapid, effective and successful peace operations. They will help restore confidence in the ability of the United Nations to respond to crises.

We are conscious of the fact that words are not enough. In the words of a former military adviser to the United Nations:

> "We can't deploy studies."

For Canada this report is only the first step in translating ideas into action. To meet the growing need for civilian personnel during crises, Canada will offer the United Nations secondment or the loan of civilian personnel on a short-term urgent basis to help in the development of a fully trained capacity in the areas of human rights, legal advice, humanitarian assistance, and other aspects of a rapid civilian response to crises.

Last week Canada sent the Secretary-General an updated inventory of Canadian personnel and equipment on stand-by to the United Nations, including technical information that would be crucial to rapid response. We are now prepared to negotiate with the United Nations a more detailed memorandum of understanding on stand-by arrangements, which would include more information on readiness and capability standards.

Our report devotes special attention to the creation of an operational-level headquarters as the heart of the "Vanguard" concept. Canada is prepared to help in establishing its headquarters should the United Nations decide to accept this recommendation. We have already made a significant number of military personnel available to the United Nations on secondment or on loan. We are prepared to make available additional personnel, both civilian and military, in order to bring this idea closer to realization.

The time for moving towards fundamental improvements in the way the United Nations responds to crises is now. A number of countries have advanced proposals similar to Canada's and there are many new and interesting proposals for change coming also from the non-governmental sector.

Follow-up is of key importance. We need to marshal our energies, to determine the most promising areas of action, and to move quickly towards putting words into action. Over the coming weeks and months, Canada intends to work closely with like-minded countries from around the world, and, of course, with the United Nations Secretariat to this end.

The ongoing work of peace-building must continue alongside preventive diplomacy and now rapid reaction operations. Indeed, peace-building involves a wide range of activities. Much of the work needed for articulating a broad vision of human security has already been done in the series of United Nations conferences in the economic and social fields, culminating in the Platform for Action recently adopted at the United Nations Conference on Women. It sets out a comprehensive view of sustainable development, which balances economic and social agendas for the purpose of promoting the well-being of society. This global consensus offers an opportunity to restore confidence in the work of the United Nations system in these fields, and to dispel the perception of aimlessness and drift. The United Nations can continue to play an invaluable role in forging global agreements on development goals, in advocating core values, and in responding to humanitarian and development needs.

We must seek to anchor change in a commitment to people-centred sustainable development. A strong emphasis must be placed on the reduction of poverty and on the integration of the poorest countries into the world economy. However, no single country, or even group of countries, can achieve global results alone. We are, therefore, determined to work with all Member States to pursue these goals sufficiently and effectively. Let me take this opportunity to set out some ideas on the way to renew commitment to the economic and social work of the United Nations.

First, there is a need to achieve the right balance between wide-ranging debate and decisions on which programmes should be adopted. The justified breadth of debate does not mean that United Nations programs should be established to address every problem. There are many other actors who play important roles. The United Nations should focus on what it is uniquely equipped to achieve.

Secondly, there is a need for a fresh sense of the real goals of development. The outcomes of the major conferences are at the core, and their distillation and coordinated follow-up should be a touchstone for the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

The roles and functions of organizations and agencies should be examined and refocused to ensure that they are oriented to future needs. The Agenda for Development is an important opportunity to initiate the institutional change required.

Improving cooperation with and among specialized agencies is essential to give limited resources some impact. The Economic and Social Council must take more responsibility for policy coordination within the United Nations system. A start was made this summer in Geneva. The recent establishment of the United Nations Programme on AIDS is a promising example. There, the executive heads of agencies and programmes must demonstrate leadership, particularly in coordinating the follow-up to international conferences and ensuring that duplication, overlapping and needless spending are eliminated as far as possible.

We must effectively harness the complementary roles of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. To ensure a smooth transition from emergencies to rehabilitation, improved cooperation in crises must be an immediate priority. I urge the Secretary-General and the leaders of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to propose new arrangements for post-crisis assistance. They could also establish a high-level working group to consider how to strengthen cooperation, both at the Organization's Headquarters and elsewhere, in areas such as data collection, analysis and reporting. The World Trade Organization (WTO) should also participate in relevant aspects of this work.

We have all come to understand the extent to which human security is indivisible from environmental security. More and more conflicts are arising following disagreement over the use of finite natural resources. The United Nations therefore has a key role to play in promoting sustainable development. Canada welcomes the recent success of United Nations conferences in some areas of international resource-management operations, such as the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Our goal is concrete, internationally sanctioned conservation measures. The same objective applies to our efforts to ensure the sustainable management of forests and arable land.

The Rio Summit achieved landmark agreements on climate change and biodiversity. Canada welcomes the progress made by the Commission on Sustainable Development and by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in clarifying their respective roles in following up these agreements in collaboration with Member States.

(spoke in English)

In speaking about the three elements — preventive action, rapid reaction and peacebuilding — I wish to emphasize the need to see them as mutually reinforcing. United Nations Member States must be committed to all three in order for any one to be successful.

To ensure a renewal of the United Nations vision through these actions, we must also reassert our commitment to assuring the effectiveness of its key bodies. Although I could speak of many United Nations agencies in this regard, because of its critical role in promoting the vision of the next 50 years, I will limit my remarks to the Security Council.

The Security Council's mandate to help prevent disputes and to resolve conflicts confer on it unique responsibilities. The binding nature of some decisions adds further weight to its deliberations.

In recent years the Council has experienced a period of intensified activity. It has also experienced setbacks from which we can all learn. One lesson of particular importance is that members of the Security Council, especially the permanent five, need to demonstrate a firm commitment to the implementation of their own decisions.

For Canada, the need for more open, transparent and collegial decision-making is crucial. There must be closer consultations with countries contributing personnel and equipment in order to help implement Council decisions. Here, real progress has been achieved of late, which Canada warmly welcomes. This progress needs to be institutionalized.

The credibility and effectiveness of the Council in promoting international peace and security is also a key element. Although we do not regard expansion of its membership as a panacea, it is clear that composition plays a role in fostering credibility and effectiveness. The Council is no longer as representative as it once was. Its legitimacy,and perhaps also the quality of its decisions, would be greatly enhanced by more representation from those countries that contribute the most to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the broad purpose of the Organization — that is, the key criterion for non-permanent membership enshrined in Article 23 of the Charter.

Perhaps it is time to reflect together on those purposes to which Article 23 refers. They would surely include participation in United Nations peace operations, commitment to arms control and disarmament, support for good-neighbourly relations, humanitarian assistance, human rights, development cooperation and the promotion of civil society. An understanding among Member States along these lines would help in the selection of non-permanent Council members, whether on the existing basis or on a modified basis.

A recurring theme throughout my remarks has been the need for the United Nations to marshal its scarce resources more effectively. There is simply no other option if we are to restore confidence in this Organization and in the specialized agencies. As the Secretary-General has stressed, the Organization's financial crisis is crippling its effectiveness and its credibility. We cannot allow this to happen.

The answer lies in addressing both expenditure and revenue. Many Governments, including Canada's, are facing difficult budgetary decisions. We have had to live with expenditure reductions in real terms while maintaining priority programmes. International organizations must respect the same pressures as domestic Governments. The United Nations and its agencies must focus on key objectives and reduce overhead spending in order to protect priority programmes. In fact, there are many steps that chief executive officers can take to increase efficiency and to reduce costs without impairing programmes, and we should all insist that they do so. Similarly, many agencies' budgets should be held at present levels, wherever possible, if not reduced. Member States must work collectively to this end. Canada strongly supports the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General for an efficiency task force to address these issues. We are prepared to contribute both expertise and personnel to get it started soon.

While the United Nations needs to do more to limit spending and to promote efficiency, its financial crisis would be significantly alleviated if its Member States were to meet their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions. Canada calls on all Member States to do so. We cannot accept that Member States, some of which rank among the richest countries in the world, fail to meet their financial obligations to this institution. This is even more difficult to accept when we consider that a number of the poorest countries in the world meet their payments in full and on time. Indeed, among the merely 60 Member States that had met their regular budget obligations to the United Nations fully by 31 July of this year, 32 were developing countries. Unfortunately, 71 other Member States had made no payment at all. Almost 100 countries still owe money from previous years, including, I have to say, several members of the Security Council. The majority of Member States appear content to approve programmes, appropriations and assessments without honouring the obligations to which they are committed. This is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue.

The General Assembly's High-level Working Group considering the United Nations financial plight should begin looking at the establishment of incentives to pay. It should also agree on an equitable method of sharing the burden, free of the distortions that characterize the present scale of assessments.

In conclusion, let me say that I have sought to pay tribute to this Organization's achievements, and to emphasize that Canada strongly supports the United Nations. We are prepared to contribute concretely and actively to its revitalization and renewal. But confidence will be restored and commitment renewed only through a partnership in which Member States live up to their commitment and focus on key priorities that respond to human-centred goals for sustainable security and development. If we are successful, and frankly I truly believe that we will be successful, I have no doubt that 50 years from now our successors will be able to praise, without hesitation or qualification, the record of our Organization's first 100 years.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru, His Excellency Mr. Francisco Tudela van Breugel Douglas.

Mr. Tudela (Peru) *(interpretation from Spanish):* Mr. President, on this important occasion, allow me to extend the congratulations of the people and Government of Peru upon your distinguished and well-deserved election to preside over the work of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your broad experience and ability will make Portugal's presidency a high-water mark in this exceptional anniversary marking half a century of the United Nations Organization.

Peru, like all the nations gathered here, is facing a time of awesome changes in social, political and economic practices and in international equilibria as this century draws to a close. Those changes have altered our vision of the world and introduced positive elements of cardinal importance, but have also left questions and shadows that cause the greatest concern. Moreover, the shared approaches that have characterized these last few years do not in themselves resolve many of the substantive problems of the international system, such as those pertaining to collective security, economic and social development and the defence of the perennial values that guarantee a worthy and peaceful life for peoples and individuals.

During the space of a decade my country experienced the worst social, political and economic crisis in its 174 years of history as an independent nation. A painful and futile internal conflict, brought on by intransigence and ideological utopianism, added to the waste of public resources and Governments overwhelmed by the nation's problems, led Peru into a deep internal crisis with grave international consequences. Over the last five years, the Government of President Alberto Fujimori has succeeded in overcoming the internal confrontation, restoring a healthy and vigorous economic order and re-establishing Peru's international ties. In this context, it is very important to stress that we have set forth on the way to turning external difficulties into patterns of normalcy and the potential consolidation of our relations with neighbouring countries, with which we wish above all to cultivate cooperation.

All of us here are aware that threats to international peace and security arise from the deterioration of the social, economic and institutional fabric of States, and that their worst effects, such as internal armed conflicts, drug trafficking, corruption and the inevitable sequel of those ills, poverty, are the seed-bed in which international conflicts tend to germinate. And all sensible people also know that the antidote to those ills is to be found in the permanent values common to all of mankind's great civilizations, the values that should guide the effective effort of the international community to overcome those acute evils.

We have left behind the international system dominated by the cold war between the super-Powers and the absurd faith in philosophical and political determinism. If we wish to build a world of justice and peace, we must dispense with the rhetorical exercises to which we became accustomed during that fortunately bygone era. We need objective points of reference for the international system that will avoid unilateral interpretations or interpretations that disregard the principles in force to bring about civilized coexistence among nations. And this requires us to refute the cynical idea that the values of the international system do not exist, or that they are entirely subordinate to relations of force between nations.

All of this implies taking initiatives to enhance and defend objective principles of international law, as the only possible foundation for the present international system. We see with great concern how ethnic, geographical and utopian myths and revisionisms are becoming a boundless source of suffering for millions of men and women in our time, gravely disturbing fragile international balances.

The struggle of the Cold War undermined the legal principles concerning avoidance of the use of force, respect for international treaties and the principle of non-intervention. Today, we have a duty to look upon international law with a new gaze; we must understand that, although international law does not in itself resolve the world's problems, it will make this world safer and more habitable, and ensure that its points of reference are more stable. We have before us the intellectual challenge of clarifying the content of the central rules of international law in order to strengthen their legitimacy, and we also have the obligation to improve the effectiveness of international law, in both bilateral and multilateral relations.

At the same time, we must not overlook the fact that the security and development of nations rests, today more than ever, upon respect for the social and intellectual features that are peculiar to each culture, unquestionably falling within a universal conception based on respect for individual freedoms. We must resist attempts to impose uniform "models" that prejudge and discriminate between the world's varying cultural forms. We must seek unity in diversity and must not accept conditionalities that are often advanced by groups foreign to the democratic representation of States, whose effects upon our cultures are negative.

There are those who argue that, having overcome the ideological conflict that divided the world for 45 years, we are now entering into a conflict of civilizations as the last phase in the evolution of the modern world's conflicts. Without accepting the determinism implicit in that view, we cannot fail to observe that a lack of respect for the cultural diversity of the human species could indeed become a source of profound disputes.

There has also been talk of the vanishing sovereignty of States as a *fait accompli*, and it is claimed that this would legitimize asymmetrical intervention by some nations in the lives of other nations. The word "sovereignty" evokes armies, ships and cannons and has an ominous ring to it. However, if we take an objective view of the matter, we cannot affirm that this is so. In its essence, sovereignty is above all plenary legal and political competence within a constitutional order. If we are today actively seeking integration in many regions of the world and if States, through various multilateral treaties, are diminishing their jurisdiction over certain aspects of their economic and social life, that is taking place because States, in the exercise of that plenary competence known as sovereignty, are voluntarily delegating the exercise of specific jurisdictions to an international organization for the greater good of a particular international space. In so doing, States do not derogate from their constitutions nor do they lose their capacity to conclude international treaties as they see fit or to legislate on countless other matters. And so we believe that those who are seeking new legal and political definitions of sovereignty should take care to respect its essence, which is nothing other than respect for the constitutional independence of the various countries of the world.

Peru opted for a republican and democratic regime based on a division of powers and officials elected by free and universal suffrage. Its government is a limited government that leaves broad areas of social, political and economic life open to the free choice of its citizens. However, this limited Government is not a minimal State without social functions, for it has active responsibilities and an important agenda to pursue in order to free the poorest citizens from a culture of dependency and integrate them fully into the life of the country. Peru seeks to harmonize transmission of the valuable cultural traditions of its people with the imperative needs of an open regionalism and the defence of a coherent, legitimate and just international order.

Basing itself upon those principles and aspirations, Peru welcomes the thinking that is taking place during this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and believes that the Organization should give serious thought to its future and to the course which international society is taking, so as to achieve a more complete vision encompassing different international realities based upon mutual respect and fairness among Member States. We must take into account the new regional realities and seek machinery that is functional, economical and efficient, not hampered by secondary issues or limited to powerlessly denouncing the contradictions of the international system, in order to ensure that the United Nations can be faithful to the purposes and principles that inspired its creation.

We believe that we must discard the pragmatism that styles itself realism and defend the fundamental principles of a balanced and just international order. Peruvians believe in defending the perennial values of mankind, individual freedoms, international law as an objective benchmark for international order, respect for the world's cultures and the constitutional independence of all the world's nations. With these beliefs, we pledge ourselves anew to the renewal of the international system.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. Hans van Mierlo.

Mr. Mierlo (Netherlands): It is a great pleasure for me to see you, Sir, presiding over this very important session of the General Assembly. As a politician with a long and distinguished career, you are eminently qualified to guide us ably through the crucial coming months.

It goes without saying that I fully endorse the intervention by Minister Solana on behalf of the European Union. At this fiftieth anniversary session of the General Assembly, I would like first of all to affirm the deep attachment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations. The United Nations is the expression of the relatively new notion that nations and people anywhere in the world have the same rights and are bound by the same duties. For 50 years, this Organization has provided the basis for building a civilized international community and we cannot afford to be cynical about the United Nations.

There is no alternative to the United Nations in dealing with global challenges. It is up to us, the Member States, to make use of the Organization and to make it work. This anniversary should be an occasion neither for self-congratulatory speeches nor for despondency. Rather, it should inspire us to unite in a renewed effort to bring the Organization into harmony with the demands of the times.

In this age of instant communication and televised images, respect for human rights and solidarity among nations can no longer be applied selectively. Aggression, war crimes and massive violations of human rights, such as those in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, trigger an immediate and massive response throughout the world. It is impossible for people to remain indifferent to the fate of their fellow human beings anywhere — unless, of course, they should be denied access to these means of communication. However, the revolutionary growth of communications has also created a gap between people's demands for action and the limited ability of Governments and organizations to satisfy these demands.

The same observation applies to national decisions touching on the security concerns of people in countries around the globe; and nowadays, these concerns include environmental, ecological and all other aspects of human security. Sovereignty has become restricted and circumscribed because of new global interdependencies.

It is an illusion to think that in this age States can continue to conduct their business in splendid isolation without regard for international public opinion and sensitivities. Again, as sovereignty becomes less formidable a barrier and people organize themselves freely and globally in various ways, the need for global regulation becomes more pressing. For this purpose, people look to the United Nations. But can the United Nations meet these new demands?

Mr. Traore (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The crises in Bosnia and Rwanda illustrate the types of conflict that at present pose the biggest threat to the international system. In many parts of the world ethnic, racial and religious divides are resurfacing with a vengeance. Where State structures are weak or disintegrating, those divides may become battlegrounds for struggles over land, water and other scarce resources.

The response of the international community to these political and humanitarian emergencies has often been inadequate, slow or hesitant. Lack of resolve in the early stages of a crisis has forced Member States to scramble later to close the gap between their acts and their words and to restore lost credibility. There is a certain tendency to take words for deeds and to be satisfied with words alone. Language is a currency whose value depends on corresponding behaviour. For the United Nations to be credible, its language must be credible, and its language can only be credible if it is matched by its deeds. These are simple, basic rules, not only in banking but also in politics. Unfortunately, it can be convenient to forget these rules for reasons of political expediency. In such cases a higher price must be paid at a later stage.

The war in former Yugoslavia is a tragedy for its people, but it also exemplifies the dangers threatening the international order. The fatal practice of "ethnic cleansing" has been unanimously condemned by the international community. Those warnings have not been heeded, and the mad dream of ethnic purity is still being pursued. The practice of "ethnic cleansing" has, moreover, set in motion a cycle of revenge and further violence.

The end of the war may now come into sight, thanks to forceful international intervention and a shifting balance on the ground. The current diplomatic initiative is designed to exploit this opportunity and finally to create conditions for true peace. We should do everything in our power to assist the negotiators in their mission. But for the international community, represented by the United Nations, the question also remains of whether it should have intervened earlier, and with greater decisiveness.

Members of all the parties to this conflict have at various times committed crimes and breaches of international law. But there is a difference in the scale of human rights violations and criminal responsibility.

The Bosnian Serb side has from the beginning resorted to "ethnic cleansing" and acts of terror against the civilian population as a systematic tool in its campaign, and therefore its leaders carry prime responsibility for initiating these practices.

The latest and perhaps largest single crime was committed against the population of the former Bosnian enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa. The victims were living in areas declared safe by the Security Council. The Serb behaviour has been condemned by the Security Council, but the United Nations and its Member States cannot escape sharing some of the blame for not living up to the United Nations commitment. We, the Member States, had convinced ourselves — and what is more, our Bosnian protégés — that a largely symbolic United Nations presence would be sufficient to deter aggression. It did not. We have been proved cruelly wrong, and as a result the populations of the enclaves paid a terrible price in terms of human life and displacement at the hands of the Bosnian Serbs. The Netherlands, whose small contingent of Blue Helmets was powerless to prevent the onslaught on Srebrenica, is deeply shocked by the massive violations of human rights which were committed by the Serb aggressors.

We share the Security Council's deep concern about the fate of the former inhabitants of Srebrenica who have not been accounted for. There are strong indications that thousands were murdered in cold blood. It is a disgrace that the Bosnian Serbs have not honoured their commitment to give immediate and full access to representatives of international organizations to investigate the situation of those who are missing. In the interest of the credibility of any future peace agreement, we cannot acquiesce in the Bosnian Serb refusal to cooperate on this and other human rights issues. We expect the same kind of cooperation from the Croat and Bosniac authorities with regard to verification of reports about human rights violations in areas under their control.

If similar calamities are to be prevented in the future, we, the Security Council and the troop contributors, must ensure that the operational aspects of the Council's resolutions have a solid foundation in military planning and available capabilities. This includes the political will to use those capabilities when needed. Therefore, in the future no mandate should be given before the means and the readiness for implementation are assured.

Srebrenica and Zepa have also shown that humanitarian action can never be a substitute for decisive measures against a party which perpetrates aggression and massive human rights violations. Humanitarian assistance, important though it undoubtedly is in itself, risks being tainted in the eye of the public if it is perceived as a substitute for decisive action going to the root of the problem.

In order to avoid the repetition of violent outbursts. the seeds of future wars must be eliminated. These seeds often lie in the ruthless exploitation of situations of potential conflict by unscrupulous politicians and local warlords. To deter such action, justice must be done and be seen to be done.

The establishment of the international criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda may prove to be an important step in the right direction, and in more than one respect. For the second time in history, after Nuremberg and Tokyo, the international community is holding individuals responsible for their actions during wartime and in the initiation of war. So, hopefully, the blame for atrocities will not be put on entire peoples, which would call for massive revenge in the future, but on those who are personally and directly responsible. We hope that the creation of these Tribunals will prove to be a catalyst for the establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

The question of United Nations credibility in Bosnia and Rwanda points to a broad range of issues related to United Nations reform in the domain of peace operations, the structure and work methods of the Security Council, finance and the economic and social area. Let me comment briefly on each of these.

At last year's session of the General Assembly I noted that a more rapid response by the United Nations might have prevented the genocide in Rwanda. My suggestion was that in order to deal with emergencies like these we should consider creating a permanent brigade which could be deployed almost instantly once the Security Council had taken a decision. In the months thereafter this idea was explored in a series of consultations in New York and at an international colloquium organized in the Netherlands. These discussions resulted in the Netherlands non-paper on a United Nations rapid deployment brigade, which was distributed to all Member States last April.

But the idea of a United Nations brigade should be seen as a contribution to the wider debate on United Nations peace operations. The most logical manner to address the problem of rapid response would be, in my opinion, a small, standing United Nations force which could fill the time lag between a Security Council decision and the deployment of national contingents. However, the Netherlands will support and actively contribute to any proposal that represents an intermediate step towards the longer-term objective of a United Nations force for rapid deployment.

Against this background, we applaud the Canadian study on a United Nations rapid-reaction capability. Among other things, it recommends, as our colleague Mr. Ouellet pointed out, setting up a United Nations planning cell, which could function as a mobile headquarters and be part of the vanguard concept. That is, it could be the nucleus of a force composed of national contingents under the United Nations stand-by arrangements system. We fully endorse this recommendation, which partly realizes the idea I raised and in due course could lead to the creation of a standing United Nations brigade. We shall be in touch with other interested Member States in order to coordinate practical suggestions with a view to possible further political action.

The continued viability of United Nations peace operations ultimately rests on the preservation of their legitimacy. This implies that the Security Council should be made more responsive to the views of the United Nations membership at large. The transparency of the Council's decision-making concerning peace operations has already undergone noticeable improvements. Nevertheless, further adjustments are called for. Therefore, we support the creation of a mechanism for the discussion of all aspects of peace operations with troop contributors.

The Assembly should address with the utmost urgency the critical financial situation of the United Nations. Without early agreement on financial contributions, there can be no basis for the necessary broad reforms. It is unacceptable that responsible Member States should carry the burden of making up for other States' lack of financial discipline.

These States are in contravention of the Charter, which makes assessed contributions, once agreed, a binding obligation on Member States and, thus, of international law. I strongly associate myself with the

European Union Presidency in calling upon Member States to pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

The problem can be solved only if Member States participate actively in the current negotiations aimed at strengthening and reforming United Nations financing and refrain from unilateral actions. The Netherlands, for its part, will participate constructively in efforts to arrive at a solution.

The provision of the necessary resources would also give the United Nations the possibility of dealing more effectively with the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. But effective multilateral action on socio-economic issues is not a matter only of financial resources. It will require new thinking on the future of the United Nations. The Secretary-General indicated the right direction last year, in "An Agenda for Development", in his analysis of the five dimensions of development: peace, economic growth, the environment, justice and democracy. A number of initiatives, some from within the Organization and others, such as the Carlsson report, from outside, aim at strengthening, revitalizing and reforming the United Nations.

The Netherlands recognizes the need for a thorough debate and early decisions on ways to improve the performance and accountability of the United Nations. We welcome these initiatives, including the creation of the High-level Open-ended Working Group by the General Assembly. I could imagine that three years from now, in 1998, a ministerial conference could meet to agree on the basis for the implementation of the High-level Group's findings.

In the field of disarmament, the Netherlands attaches the highest priority to the conclusion next year of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In order to ensure that the negotiations will reach this absolutely essential objective, they should be given a strong political impulse.

In this context, the Netherlands deplores the recent nuclear tests and fervently hopes that the other nuclear-weapon States will maintain their moratoriums. A decision not to conduct any further tests would be of great benefit to the creation of a positive climate for the resumption of the negotiations and their successful completion in 1996. Therefore, the Netherlands strongly urges the nuclear-weapon States to desist from all further testing.

Having said all this, I should like to close on a note of hope and appreciation for what the United Nations has done and can continue to do in a number of very important areas. I am thinking of the environment, the population problem, human rights, the status of women, democratization and social policy. In these areas, the United Nations is providing the infrastructure for the shaping and consolidation of a world-wide consensus and for the practical realization of what this consensus is about. Much of this happens through large-scale conferences, with elaborate preparatory processes involving the various regions of the world and a wide spectrum of both governmental and non-governmental actors.

The women's Conference in Beijing is clear proof of the crucial role of these meetings in bringing about a global awareness of the issues at stake. These conferences set norms and standards by which individuals and non-governmental organizations around the world can measure the progress made by Governments and by the United Nations as a whole towards well-defined goals. If properly implemented and monitored they can prove to be decisive for the quality of life of future generations, and even of our own, and for the credibility of our Organization.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri.

Mr. Dembri (Algeria) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me first to say how pleased we are to see Ambassador Freitas do Amaral of Portugal presiding over this session of the General Assembly, a session that coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. His election to the presidency is a tribute that expresses recognition of his personal qualities. We welcome this unanimous election of a high-ranking representative of the friendly country, Portugal, whose skills and experience we value. I should like to assure him of the support and cooperation of Algeria.

I should also like to express Algeria's gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Côte d'Ivoire for his outstanding efforts and achievements throughout his mandate. We are very grateful to him for the manner in which he has honoured Africa and wish him every success in his work in the service of his country.

I should also like to say how grateful we are to the Secretary-General of the Organization, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and how much we appreciate his sagacity and resolve at a time when the role of the Organization *vis-à-vis* the call for peace, security and development, is becoming more urgent. I wish to renew to him assurances of our full confidence and continuing support.

This session of the General Assembly is truly exceptional in that it takes place at a time when the international community is at a historic turning-point. Never before has there been such a need for stability and security, nor has there been a more pressing quest for a fairer, more equitable and balanced world. Herein lies the symbiotic significance of this fiftieth session of the General Assembly. It comes as a timely reminder of the importance of world peace and security and of the need for our nations to organize their common future on new foundations.

Thus, when we take stock of the Organization's activities over the past 50 years in all areas of international life, the transformations and shortcomings such stocktaking reveals make it incumbent upon us to make a special effort to identify the stakes and the challenges we must face up to as the century draws towards its end.

How our world shapes up will depend on our doing so. Therefore, the ambition of the world Organization should be to give true content to collective security and to promote the creation of a new paradigm for development.

The United Nations must adapt to a changing and singularly complex world reality by going back to the source, to the principles upon which it was founded if it is to forge a new future for all.

At a time when the international order has lost its regulatory capability and the international community lacks the frames of reference that could help guide its action, it is up to the United Nations to regulate inter-State relations, to promote a stable and equitable order and to foster a model that would be acceptable to all.

At a time when it is becoming clear that trade globalization and market integration respond only partially to the growing need for justice, equity, stability and security, the United Nations must take its position at the forefront of the drive towards harmonization which is a must for conflict prevention, crisis management, *rapprochement* between peoples and the promotion of cooperation between States.

However, if the Organization is to perform its role, it must be given the means that would enable it to better organize international society and equip it to face up to the upsurge of intolerance, the escalation of terrorism, the exacerbation of tensions and conflicts, the aggravation of the economic situation of the most deprived countries, the social malaise in the industrialized countries and an overall decline. In short, the United Nations must be equipped with the means that would enable it to defend freedom, law, justice and equity.

This means that nothing could be done in the absence of the political will of States that bear the responsibility of dispelling doubts and remedying the disaffection that is noticeable today *vis-à-vis* the United Nations by giving true meaning to the Organization's invaluable and multifarious contributions towards the promotion of an international society that is more just, better organized and better structured.

Whether it is a matter of democratizing international relations, completing the process of decolonization, upholding human rights, strengthening the disarmament enterprise or ensuring the continuity of international efforts to promote development, the contributions of States and their awareness of their responsibilities remain indispensable if the United Nations is to be able to perform the ever-developing role it has to play in this context.

Proceeding from this, it is only by improving the collective capabilities of the international community to face up to the urgent and most intolerable injustices that a true meaning could be given to preventive efforts of diplomacy, to peace-keeping operations and to the elaboration of a genuine structure of international cooperation.

It is only with a new vision, a new thinking and new modalities of action that the international community would be able to surmount obstacles and ensure future success.

As we approach the end of the century, it is important to rethink our practices with a view to elaborating long-term complementarities that would rise up to future challenges, spare the world new crises and establish the regulatory rules our world needs.

It is this vision that inspires Algeria in its thinking of the need for international action that should be made more palpable in order to ensure greater consultation among nations, and greater understanding among peoples as well as greater courage in striving to achieve peace and development.

It is this vision that guides Algeria's national renewal endeavour which aims at establishing on firm foundations the rule of law, promoting economic reform and strengthening the democratic process.

The democratic presidential elections, the first round of which will take place on 16 November 1995, will translate into actual political reality, the will and desire to promote the sense of responsibility of all Algerians and to hasten the laying of firm foundations for an open, free and democratic society.

This democratic process, an ever-renewed experiment, is bound to contribute to the achievement of stability, the concretization of democratic freedoms and development in our region, and, as it truly expresses the aspirations of our peoples, it will be the appropriate retort to all attempts at subversion, of which terrorism is the most abhorrent manifestation. To us, combating terrorism is a battle in defence of democracy. As any complacency *vis-à-vis* terrorism would be an absolute negation of democracy, it follows that we cannot remain indifferent to this scourge which poses a really serious threat to international peace and security. Thus, the struggle against terrorism does not allow of any laxity but must be pursued most vigorously in the context of decisive international action whose aim should be the total eradication of this scourge from all our societies.

If we are to rise up to this challenge, there is a need to accord a high priority to economic and social development. This is a need that is more urgent than ever before. Its relevance has been recognized today by all the Governments of one region. Awareness of the threat of the scourge of terrorism and the interest shown in the Algerian proposal regarding the need for a response in solidarity within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean region demonstrate fully the strength of this conviction.

In the context of the newly emerging political, economic and social realities, Algeria has accorded special priority in the context of its immediate environment, to the problems of security and development and to the sort of contributions required in resolving such problems.

Proceeding from this, Algeria is convinced that the unitary Maghreb project is necessary, not only for the security and stability of the Maghreb region, but also for the prosperity of the Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as the Arab and African regions.

It is precisely within the context of the need to establish a unified, strong and stable Maghreb region that Algeria makes its contribution towards the achievement of a just and lasting settlement to the question of Western Sahara. Part and parcel of this policy is Algeria's support of the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General aimed at a transparent and credible implementation of the settlement plan through a genuine referendum, which would ensure the free exercise by the people of the Western Sahara of its right to self-determination and independence.

Any violation of the settlement plan, especially through the moving foreign populations to the Western Sahara, would have very serious consequences for the peace process. All obstacles that impede the implementation of the settlement plan should be dealt with through direct dialogue between the two parties to the conflict, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front, with the aim of creating the proper conditions for a peaceful settlement to the conflict that would realize the aspirations of the peoples of the region. A just and lasting settlement to the question of the Western Sahara would contribute to the strengthening of the Maghreb unitary edifice, thus making it a fundamental element of success for medium- and long-term cooperative strategies in both the Sahelian-Saharan and Mediterranean regions.

In this connection, to lift the sanctions which continue to severely afflict the brotherly Libyan people and to search for urgent solutions to the relevant differences, is an urgent need that acquires particular significance and should make part of any forward-looking strategy. Here, as elsewhere, political will underscores the need for an intelligent understanding of the situation and for a positive dialectic that would contribute to the building of a community of stability and progress. It is in this spirit that we continue to deploy efforts that aim at consolidating cooperation in the sahelian-Saharan region, an enterprise which we shall endeavour to pursue to success at the forthcoming Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona.

In the Middle East, where the building of peace requires from all parties sincerity, determination and respect for the commitments undertaken, Algeria continues to make its contribution towards the establishment of a lasting peace based on a just and overall settlement consistent with the rights of all the region's peoples. That is why, while supporting the peace process, Algeria has continuously underscored the need for withdrawal by Israel from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif and respect for the national inspirations of the Palestinian people. In this context, Algeria welcomes the conclusion of the agreement on the extension of Palestinian national autonomy in the west bank of the Jordan as a new positive step and calls for its translation into concrete reality.

The search for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East calls for full awareness of the fact that the challenges which face the peoples of the region require more wide-ranging and more efficacious solutions. From this standpoint, since Iraq is fulfilling its commitments which arise from the Security Council resolutions, the sanctions which severely afflict the people of this country should be lifted.

By the same token, Kuwait's internationally recognized borders must be fully respected. Finally, the restoration of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the islands of Abou-Moussa, greater Tumb, and lesser Tumb must be reaffirmed. By meeting these conditions, new prospects for stability and security in the region can emerge.

The alarming situation in Africa, where instability and uncertainty are symptomatic of a protracted crisis and where the fundamental elements of a new solution are being sought against a backdrop of disorder, the hotbeds of tension that persist in Angola, Liberia, Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia must now be quenched. However, any return to stability will only take place through economic recovery and escape from the economy of indebtedness that has severely damaged social cohesion, to a new type of economic organization that would foster growth and guarantee the modalities of international integration.

As of necessity, this calls for dealing, as a matter of urgency, with the social costs of structural adjustment and implementing the new United Nations programme for Africa in order to avoid the tragedies and sufferings that beset the peoples of Africa and to put an end to the marginalization of the African continent. This is the price-tag on stability and peace in Africa and security in the world.

We are equally concerned at the latest developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina where an entire people, whose very survival is threatened, face hatred, exclusion and the insanity of ethnic cleansing. It is no longer possible to tolerate this savage onslaught on the conscience of humanity. It is the international community's duty and responsibility to put an end to this situation which is politically unacceptable and morally intolerable. From this rostrum, I would like to reiterate Algeria's solidarity with and support for Bosnia and Herzegovina in exercising its right to defend its unity and territorial integrity and to protect the dignity and values of its citizens. In this spirit, Algeria has supported the current peace initiatives aimed at a just and lasting solution that would ensure respect for the constitutional principles that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina wish freely to choose.

In addition to these concerns, Algeria has commitments relating to peace throughout the world, as entered into in the framework of United Nations peace-keeping operations in Angola, Cambodia and Haiti, and participation in the election monitoring process that led to the birth of the new South Africa.

All this reflects Algeria's posture and its commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security. This is reflected in the comprehensive and coherent policy Algeria has always pursued with regard to disarmament issues, a policy that has led to its accession to the major disarmament instruments. Its recent accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), its effective contribution to the promotion of consensus solutions in the negotiations on the Treaty's extension, and ratification, several weeks ago of the Chemical Weapons Convention, are significant moves that reflect Algeria's desire to play an active role in achieving general and complete disarmament.

The need for a viable international order based on solidarity has never been as urgent as it is now at a time when the world is in the throes of a phase of systematic transition.

If it acknowledges how far we are interdependent, the international community will be able to usher in an orderly world society of solidarity that respects the diversity it enjoys.

That is the reason why we must reduce the widening gap between North and South that, in the long term, are anathema to both international peace and security, and put our minds to the establishment of new balances based on renewed international relations. Such relations, if they are based on consultation and openness to the solidarity interests of the international community, will promote credible solutions to development problems. They must validate the efforts of developing countries to regulate domestic adjustment processes, restore social balances and ensure all the conditions for meaningful integration into the new international order.

In the face of rapid changes that threaten social fabric across the board, it is essential to promote a stable, predictable international economic environment that would be conducive to development efforts. In this context, more equitable financial, monetary, trading and technological relations must provide the basis for re-establishing trade as an effective instrument for mutual development, for reconciling peoples and strengthening the international community.

In the face of these challenges, the United Nations, with its experience and credibility in terms of global issues, can provide inspiration, encouragement and help to elaborate and follow up future strategies. It is therefore our duty and responsibility to ensure that the United Nations Organization reasserts its authority, makes its structures more democratic and rationalizes its working methods.

Such an endeavour should be founded on the reaffirmation of Member States' commitments to the kind of renewal that is based on and inspired by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

This means that any restructuring of the United Nations system must meet the requirements of true democracy in international relations and should focus on the revitalization of its bodies, improving coordination between them, rehabilitating the General Assembly and ensuring transparency in reforming the Security Council. Whether it is a matter of establishing order among the essential elements of action or global decision-making, the prerequisite of democracy is now at the very heart of the problems of peace and development. In this context, "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" are of the utmost importance.

Thus, if we look clearly at the international situation and what is really at stake, this adaptation process will lead to new hope for humanity and ensure a lasting foothold in history for international peace and security.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, His Excellency Mr. Niels Helveg Petersen.

Mr. Petersen (Denmark): It is a sad irony that while we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Organization finds itself in serious financial crisis. If not redressed, this crisis will threaten the very goals of our Organization.

Denmark gives top priority to a strengthening of the United Nations. Hopefully, we can make headway during this session of the General Assembly as regards the financial situation of the United Nations and the "Agenda for Development". We hope that the High-level Working Group under the chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly will keep up the momentum of the reform process.

I wish to concentrate on eight points.

The first is social development. The World Summit in Copenhagen identified new approaches for action. States have the primary responsibility to attain the goals of the Summit. In this endeavour, we need the full support of the international community, the United Nations, the multilateral financial institutions, regional organizations, local authorities and the civil society. All partners must participate fully and must increase their efforts.

We also need specific efforts to keep the Summit issues on the agenda. To stimulate the implementation of the Summit results, Denmark would like to see established an independent forum on social development issues. This forum should supplement the work of international organizations and of intergovernmental cooperation. In particular, it should compile and analyze data on social development issues, thus providing the basis for dialogue. I hope that agreement on the creation of the forum can be reached at this session of the General Assembly.

Sustainable economic and social development requires a collective effort. It requires a substantial transfer of resources, concessional as well as unconcessional, private as well as public, from the developed world to the developing world.

The total volume of assistance to developing countries has declined over the past few years. We must change this sad pattern. A first, necessary step would be for all industrialized countries to live up to the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP). Three years ago, Denmark reached 1 per cent of GNP. We intend to continue that policy.

The need for emergency relief is greater than ever. It is a short-sighted solution to finance emergency relief out of funds set aside for development. We must find additional financing.

Improving the condition of women throughout the world is of vital importance. We, the Member States of the United Nations, have the responsibility to implement the Platform for Action adopted at Beijing. This platform must be pursued at all levels. Let us start right now.

The second point is the "Agenda for Peace". The ideas expressed therein on preventive diplomacy and a rapid reaction force must be implemented, followed — after a conflict has ended — by confidence-building and humanitarian measures.

Many of these tasks can be carried out by regional organizations. Giving more responsibility to regional organizations would in Europe mean strengthening the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

We have seen an increase in the number and complexity of peace-keeping operations. Successful operations such as those in Namibia, Cambodia and, most recently, Mozambique and El Salvador should not be forgotten. As noted by the Secretary-General, the problems posed by several of today's conflicts are unprecedented. We must learn to tackle these new problems. United Nations peace-keeping forces have proved to be an invaluable tool. We all have an interest in improving peace-keeping as a unique instrument in international crisis management.

We must react strongly against deliberate attacks against United Nations personnel. Such attacks are absolutely unacceptable. I appeal to all Member States to adhere to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel so that persons committing attacks against United Nations personnel are brought to justice.

Denmark attaches great importance to the United Nations stand-by forces arrangement. We were among the first to assign troops. We are currently, together with like-minded countries, exploring practical ways to a further shortening of United Nations reaction time.

There is also a clear need for minimum standards as regards troops and equipment. Denmark supports action taken by the United Nations in the field of training. The United Nations must be given the right to set quality standards for troops made available to the Organization.

The insufficiency of funds is putting the United Nations into an almost untenable operational situation. We must soon reach consensus on reforming and stabilizing the financial foundation of the Organization.

As regards reimbursement for equipment put at the disposal of the Organization, agreement on a new system must be reached during this session of the General Assembly.

The third point concerns the former Yugoslavia. More than two thirds of the total number of troops under the United Nations serve in the former Yugoslavia. The international community has made a substantial contribution towards settling the conflict. We have kept negotiations going, sometimes against all odds. We have sustained what may be the most difficult peace-keeping operation the United Nations has ever mounted. We have rendered extensive humanitarian aid.

We hope that we are now closer to peace. Still, many obstacles will have to be overcome. The conflict remains a huge challenge to the international community.

The basic principles for a settlement in Bosnia agreed upon in Geneva early this month form a good basis for further negotiations. Pressure on all parties for a negotiated settlement must be upheld. Lasting peace can be achieved only through negotiations.

Denmark continues to give full support to the international negotiating efforts, including the efforts of the Contact Group. Denmark has provided a substantial number of peace-keepers and given sizeable contributions to alleviate humanitarian suffering. This commitment stands.

But it is absolutely unacceptable when United Nations peace-keepers are used as pawns in military confrontations. It is intolerable to see them exposed to surprise actions and direct attacks with loss of life and casualties as the tragic consequence.

The international community must be prepared for action to be taken when peace is finally achieved. Denmark stands ready to contribute. The present situation presents a window of opportunity; we must seize the moment.

I would like to express my congratulations on the interim agreement between the Greek and the Macedonian Governments and to pay tribute to the untiring efforts of Mr. Cyrus Vance.

My fourth point relates to the Middle Fast peace process. The strong determination to reach results manifested itself in the peace treaty signed last autumn between Israel and Jordan and in the latest agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on the second stage of Palestinian autonomy. Unfortunately, we see less progress in relations between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel. But we welcome the clear political will to engage in efforts that may bring progress. All parties stand to gain if they realize that there is no real alternative to negotiations and to a just and lasting peace for everybody.

My fifth point is that there is now hope in the field of disarmament, arms control and confidence-building measures. We see positive trends, in particular the agreement reached on indefinitely extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The implementation of this Treaty has also become more effective. The end of East-West confrontation has led to dramatic reductions in nuclear stockpiles. But as long as these weapons exist, the risk of their use remains. Denmark supports the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than 1996. In particular we support the efforts made to negotiate a true zero-yield test ban.

At the same time, we deeply deplore the nuclear tests carried out by China and France. We urge all nuclear-weapon States to refrain from further testing.

The Conference to review the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects is now taking place at Vienna. We need progress at the Conference towards the ultimate goal of the abolition of anti-personnel land mines.

The sixth point is that the Security Council needs to be enlarged to reflect the world of today. There must be additional seats for non-permanent members on the principle of equitable geographical representation. Denmark also supports an enlargement of the Security Council with Germany and representatives of the Asian, African and Latin American regions as permanent members.

My seventh point relates to human rights. The international protection of human rights must be improved. International cooperation on monitoring respect for human rights must be strengthened. Additional resources to carry out this work must be found. In particular, we must strengthen the Centre for Human Rights and the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Denmark will serve as a member of the Commission on Human Rights as from 1 January 1996. Our key priorities as a member of that Commission will include the fight against torture, the furthering of the right to development and the rights of indigenous peoples. The establishment of a permanent forum within the United Nations is a major political aspiration of indigenous peoples around the world. Denmark shares that aspiration.

The General Assembly should decide to call a diplomatic conference on the establishment of a permanent International criminal court to try cases of serious international crime.

With my final point I wish to draw attention to the statement issued today by the Nordic Foreign Ministers on the financial situation of the United Nations. In that statement the Nordic countries call on all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations towards the United Nations by immediately paying all outstanding contributions. Imagine how much more could be done if the United Nations had its present outstanding contributions — $3.5 billion — at its disposal. It is a paradox that those criticizing the United Nations for a lack of efficiency are often those who do not honour their financial obligations. They are in this way holding the Organization hostage. They continue to criticize the United Nations as if the Organization were not their organization.

Denmark sees no alternative to international cooperation to solve global problems. The will of Member States determines the strength of our cooperation. Much more can be done, provided Governments are willing.

The United Nations has experienced much turbulence. The United Nations needs renewal. The United Nations needs resources. The United Nations needs commitment. Denmark remains as dedicated to the United Nations today as we were 50 years ago.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, His Excellency Mr. Erik Derycke.

Mr. Derycke (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*):

> "[Today more then ever we should realize that we are delegations of many countries] to the same Assembly which collectively represents the interests of the world. [We must be] conscious, over and above the interests of our own country, of the interests of the world and of mankind.
>
> "Each of us must first of all make an effort to sink our preferences, to put aside our particular sympathies and our particular antipathies.
>
> "The fact is that ... we did not succeed in forming a real international spirit. ... If we can create that kind of spirit, and if we can practice what I regard as the two cardinal virtues ... that is to say, good faith and good will, if we are able to apply certain simple but important rules ... we shall succeed.
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> "[In an Assembly like that of the United Nations, we must make a great effort to bridge our various views.] Naturally, we must all watch over the interests of our respective countries, but we shall not succeed unless we are convinced that those interests must take their place in the wider setting of the general interest." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, First Session, Part One, Plenary Meetings, 2nd meeting, p. 48)*

What I have just said was not written recently. It was not written when we drafted the Belgian statement for the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. It was an extract from the official statement delivered by the President of the General Assembly at its first session, Mr. Paul Henri Spaak, then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium. His appeal, issued at London on 11 January 1946, is as pertinent today as it was then.

The United Nations was long paralysed by geopolitical problems posed by the East-West rivalry, but in recent years the Organization has been able increasingly to focus on all aspects of universal society. This is a philosophy that marks a change in global attitude. Human rights, sustainable development, the environment, social change, population questions and the rights of women, to name but a few, have been on the agenda of the major international conferences successfully organized by the United Nations. A precondition for the success of this international approach is that we have the courage to break away from the old taboos and dare for the first time to discuss issues as never before.

It is impossible for me here to discuss each and every one of these items, and I shall limit myself to highlighting two of them. I realize that in doing so I may be ignoring so many other problems which are important for the immediate future of our United Nations.

I will start with the question of disarmament. In May this year 180 countries agreed to the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The five nuclear Powers pledged to reduce further their already greatly reduced arsenals, and all other participants solemnly promised indefinitely never to acquire these weapons, which jeopardize the very existence of the Earth. Belgium urged other non-nuclear-weapon States to accept the indefinite extension of the NPT; I detected the firm will of all signatories to respect the Treaty in letter and spirit.

We expect nevertheless that nuclear arsenals will be further reduced. In this context we pin great hopes on the prompt ratification of the START II treaty. Nuclear non-proliferation should be strengthened as soon as possible by the signing next year of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and by a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for military use. Those two treaties will provide an indispensable complement to the NPT on the path towards the total nuclear disarmament which Belgium has always desired.

The coming negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty will show whether or not the nuclear Powers are willing to accept the zero option, which to my mind is the most important question for the future. In this context Belgium deplores the recent nuclear tests and fervently hopes that the other nuclear-weapon States will maintain their moratoriums. A decision not to conduct any further tests would strongly promote the creation of a propitious atmosphere for the resumption of the negotiations and their successful completion in 1996. On behalf of Belgium, I strongly urge the nuclear-weapon States to desist from all further testing.

I have just spoken about what are called weapons of mass destruction, and obviously the threat posed by nuclear and biological weapons is enormous. But we should remember that in fact it is conventional weapons that claim by far the most victims. In cooperation with the European Union, Belgium will play an active role in this field, as we have done in recent months with regard to anti-personnel mines. In this regard my country has been a pioneer, including through the adoption by its Parliament of forward-looking legislation prohibiting the production and use of such weapons in Belgium. In the United Nations we joined in the initiative to hold a special conference in Geneva, over which my country had the honour to preside. Belgium is also aware of the dangers posed by new laser weapons and their horrendous consequences. My country is prepared to adopt an activist policy in this sphere.

To my mind, the next priority of the United Nations is social and economic progress. The promotion and protection of human rights are an essential element of this. Our own history shows that respect for human rights and the existence of a State based on law and of political institutions elected and functioning democratically and following the principles of good management are absolute conditions for sustainable development.

Yet we cannot say that the results of international cooperation have been altogether positive. Countries both of the South and of the North must ponder this. It makes no sense to speak of peace on Earth if at the same time we cannot pursue the planet's social and economic development. World-wide overall wealth has increased sevenfold in the past 50 years and international trade has grown even more. But at the same time poverty has never been greater. Furthermore, economic recession and the debt crisis have affected certain sections of the population in developing countries more than others. The inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth have therefore become even greater. To combat this we need to act internationally, if only because of the globalization of the world economy. Intensive multilateral cooperation, including cooperation between the international financial institutions, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Trade Organization will be necessary. We must also consider how the population can be involved in the preparation and implementation of reforms.

Of prime concern are basic needs. Real social development is impossible if those are not cared for. Belgium is ready to participate in this effort, as it has long done. The Belgian social security system too is marking its fiftieth anniversary. That system is now being questioned, for the unemployment rate has increased dramatically, threatening the financing of the whole system. However, this system remains the best guarantee for preserving the balance between economic development and social development. The State should remain responsible for the provision of the basic needs for all.

Belgium therefore calls for the development of a mechanism which allows economic development to go hand in hand with social development. Governments must respect the rights of workers and improve working conditions and the security and health of the workers. The five basic social conventions of the ILO — relating to minimum age for employment, the abolition of slavery, freedom of trade unions, freedom of negotiation and non-discrimination — should be internationally recognized as fundamental conventions, which would provide a concrete impetus for this.

The major international conferences organized by the United Nations have proven a useful means of studying basic questions relating to the goal of social emancipation and genuine sustainable development in all countries. In Rio de Janeiro, old concepts of development were replaced by that of sustainable development, which has functioned as a common theme throughout all the other conferences.

At the World Conference on Human Rights, in Vienna, a Declaration was adopted which underscored and enriched the universal consensus on the respect due under all circumstances to human beings. It called on all Member States not only to prevent human rights violations, but also to promote those rights. For its part, Belgium was the first country in Europe to adopt a law, in February 1994, linking respect for human rights to development cooperation.

The International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo, recognized the relationship between the individual's reproductive and sexual health and the development of every individual and every country.

The importance of the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen, lay above all in its integrated approach to linking the fight against poverty, the creation of jobs, and the promotion of social integration, and in the adoption on that basis of coordinated national and international strategies. It is gratifying also to note the universal consensus on the concepts and issues that will deserve our attention in the future.

Finally, the Fourth World Conference on Women, recently held at Beijing, stressed the role of women as full participants in the decision-making process and in economic affairs, by recognizing that genuine sustainable development and true democracy will be impossible without women.

The United Nations should make economic and social development its highest priority. It should involve world public opinion in these decisions and should ensure their follow-up and resolutely implement them in the field. Belgium is prepared to reflect the programmes of action of all these conferences in its future policies in the spheres of development cooperation, foreign trade, international finance and in its foreign policy in general.

I have laid stress on two areas where the United Nations will play a decisive role. It will be a challenge to us all; the results will not be assessed until the hundredth anniversary of the United Nations. To meet our goal, it is vital for us to strengthen the tool that is the United Nations. The United Nations and its specialized agencies must maintain — and strengthen and adapt — their resources and activities so as to give effect to the decisions and achievements of these conferences. Specifically, duplication must be avoided; rationalization and the possible merging of bodies working in the same field are inevitable.

The Economic and Social Council must be rehabilitated; its role could be reviewed. It should be the most suitable body for staging international conferences and, through the United Nations system, should coordinate and supervise the implementation of conventions and programmes. It should also spur interaction among the major agencies and institutions of the United Nations system.

The agenda of the General Assembly must be reviewed so that the Assembly can regain its original role as the Organization's supreme decision-making, deliberative and policy-making body.

Security Council reform is the subject of intense debate. Without going into details, I would like to recall Belgium's view that such reform should strengthen, *inter alia*, the Council's capacity for action and its representativity. The Charter gives the Council responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of all, and for the benefit of all. Belgium is convinced that the authority of Council decisions would be enhanced if troop- and equipment-contributing countries were more closely involved in the preparation of those decisions.

The Organization is facing numerous financial problems. The development of new activities is often hobbled by disagreements on the allocation of costs. There is a growing structural rift between the capacity for multilateral action and the increasingly frequent demands for intervention.

How can we prevent the United Nations from becoming a victim of its own success? One fundamental obligation is that every Member State must promptly pay the contribution it has been assessed based on its ability to pay. Non-payment is a serious violation of commitments, and is even more deplorable when certain delinquent contributors are also demanding a special role in the Organization's policy- and decision-making processes.

Finally, we must keep working towards the new international spirit to which I referred at the beginning of my statement. Without such a new awareness in society at large, we shall never be able to make the United Nations into the universal instrument for peace and sustainable development it must be. In that context, I want to close with another quotation from that great statesman, the first President of the General Assembly, Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak, who as early as 1943 said that

> "The world will never be organized if each State retains its full national sovereignty and the absolute right to resolve its political and economic problems as it sees fit".

The Acting President *(interpretation from French):* I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, His Excellency Mr. Povilas Gylys.

Mr. Gylys (Lithuania): It is with great pleasure that I join previous speakers in congratulating Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. It is a great honour and a great challenge to be serving in that capacity at a time when the United Nations is marking its first 50 years of existence, and when people are hoping for a better world — as Mr. do Amaral noted in his statement last week — through peace, freedom, justice, education, health and development.

Fifty years ago, the United Nations was formed to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the well-being of all people. The

United Nations aim of promoting international cooperation is still alive half a century later, although it is facing more challenges than ever before.

Lithuania itself is facing, and meeting, new challenges. In the less than six years since the reestablishment of independence, Lithuania has enshrined democratic values in its constitution, established the rule of law, promoted human rights and implemented free-market economic reforms. Our foreign policy is based on respect for international law, national sovereignty, human rights and peaceful coexistence among nations — especially our most immediate neighbours. The best testimony to our good-neighbourly relations is provided by the treaties we have concluded with all neighbouring States; they were a result of hard work and compromise. It is our view that they constitute a major contribution to the security of the region and of the entire world.

Our other foreign-policy goals are also clearly defined. Lithuania is striving for full integration into European political, economic and collective-security structures. As an associate member of the European Union, our ultimate goal is full membership in the Union. Membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and in the Western European Union (WEU) is also a high priority. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with and our active participation in regional organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe.

The United Nations is facing new challenges today. A half-century later it is not only proper to assess the Organization's performance, but also necessary to prepare it for the new demands and problems resulting from the dramatic changes that have come about since the end of the cold war. The number and importance of the challenges that face the United Nations call for reforms. The United Nations is expected to solve many problems, such as armed conflicts, human rights violations, the poverty gap and humanitarian crises. The problems presented by conflicts such as those in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia are in many ways unprecedented. The United Nations is expected to provide development assistance and emergency relief to refugees. It is expected to promote democracy and to safeguard the health and rights of women and children. The United Nations is expected to play a leading role in solving environmental and population problems and in securing sustainable development. It is expected to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

If the United Nations is to live up to these expectations, Member States will have to provide it with the necessary means to do so. For this reason, Lithuania attaches importance to the efforts aimed at the revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, and will follow with interest the initiatives directed towards that goal. Good management in the Secretariat is an important tool in achieving that goal. Better productivity and increased cost-effectiveness, as well as accountability and responsibility, can make a difference in creating a more mission-driven and result-oriented Organization. Energies and resources within the United Nations system need to be utilized in a more effective and coordinated manner if the Organization is to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Likewise, there is a need for integrated policies to address these global problems, which too often are treated as separate questions. In that regard, we see a close connection between "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development", and are in full agreement that the quest for peace and security should not divert attention from other fundamental objectives of the Organization, especially in the fields of economic and social development.

Another priority for a revitalized United Nations is reform of the Security Council. Lithuania supports continued discussion on the transparency of the work of the Security Council. Recent informal arrangements to improve consultation on peace-keeping between the Secretariat, the Security Council and troop contributors should be further developed. The Security Council must be more representative of the greatly expanded membership of the United Nations, and it has to take into account the interests of small States and of all regions, including those of Central and Eastern Europe. We believe that an increase in the overall membership of the Council is needed and that an increase in the permanent membership should reflect current geopolitical realities. In this context, Lithuania supports an increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council with new members to come from among countries that make an exceptional contribution to the activities of the United Nations. This would significantly strengthen the authority and capability of the United Nations as a whole. It goes without saying that reform of the Security Council should not decrease its effectiveness or its efficient functioning.

The tremendous increase in and complexity of peace-keeping operations in recent years clearly signals the need for change. We cannot ignore the financial consequences of this increase. The budget for peace-keeping operations currently amounts to approximately $3.6 billion. We must strengthen preventive diplomacy in order to avoid overextending our capabilities in the area of peace-keeping. Nevertheless, Lithuania will continue to play its part in peace-keeping, as it is already doing in the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO); it stands ready to do more. The third platoon of Lithuanian peace-keepers is now serving in Croatia within the Danish battalion. We are actively participating in the NATO Partnership for Peace programme and are moving forward on the formation and training of a Baltic peace-keeping battalion.

Lithuania also welcomes the growing interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the OSCE and NATO, in the field of peace-keeping operations. This approach enables regional organizations to share the common burden of peace-keeping functions and to contribute, together with the United Nations, to the maintenance of peace and security. OSCE missions are actively promoting peaceful political solutions to regional crises in Chechnya, Georgia, Nagorny-Karabakh, Tajikistan and elsewhere.

Although Lithuania believes that European countries should try to solve their own problems in the framework of the OSCE before turning to the United Nations, we hope that cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations will be strengthened in areas of common concern, particularly on issues concerning stability and security in the OSCE area. Further work needs to be done in developing a standard set of principles for peace-keeping activities undertaken by individual States or third parties.

Any strategy for preventing armed conflicts should involve disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. The easy availability of arms contributes to the scale of suffering in conflict situations as well as to the outbreak of conflict itself. Lithuania wholeheartedly supported the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), because it views the Treaty as a crucial instrument for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and for reducing existing stocks.

We recognize that, although the threat posed by nuclear weapons is of prime concern, the ongoing use of conventional weapons is equally dangerous. There is a need for States to exercise greater responsibility and restraint in their arms transfers. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has led to greater transparency, but a code of conduct for conventional arms transfers could set out common principles to be observed in this area.

Drug trafficking and associated international crime are another growing threat to the security and well-being of nations and peoples. We give our full support to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, which has the responsibility of leading the global fight against this scourge. In view of the continuous and growing rise in drug-related problems throughout the world, including in our region, we encourage closer cooperation in this area.

The situation in Rwanda and in former Yugoslavia is uppermost in our minds, as are other armed conflicts closer to home, which have resulted in bloodshed and systematic violations of human rights. Racial and ethnic hatred have led to particularly inhumane behaviour. These horrible lessons must never be forgotten; nor should these crimes against humanity go unpunished. This is why we are in favour of strengthening mechanisms to monitor and protect human rights by fully implementing the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and by strengthening the Centre for Human Rights. In order to avoid duplication, we encourage further coordination of United Nations human rights activities with regional bodies carrying out similar mandates.

Mr. Kuller (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Lithuania also feels that the mandate for peace-keeping operations could include a human rights component with clearly established reporting and verification procedures. When terrible crimes are committed and when human rights are systematically violated despite all efforts, Lithuania believes that those responsible, including the actual perpetrators, should be prosecuted. We thus support moves to establish a permanent international criminal court which would have jurisdiction over serious crimes of international concern, wherever they occur.

Lithuania places great importance on the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the principal funding agency and coordinator of United Nations technical and development assistance. Since the establishment of the UNDP office in Vilnius in 1992, my Government, with support from UNDP, has launched programmes in such priority sectors as democratization and the development of civil society, public administration reform and the social impact of transition. We are especially grateful for UNDP assistance in the preparation of our 1995 national development report.

My Government reaffirms the need for the full integration of countries with economies in transition into the world economy and for continued United Nations support in achieving that goal. We see the concept of transition as a temporary one, which at this point in time identifies the special needs and immediate concerns of countries undergoing fundamental political, economic and social transformation. We hope that these needs and concerns will be reflected in "An Agenda for Development". Lithuania recognizes the fine work done by the Economic Commission for Europe in diagnosing the problems of transitional economies and in preparing useful recommendations.

I also wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in my country. UNICEF has provided much-appreciated technical and advisory services on meeting global objectives for the welfare of children.

Recent major international conferences in Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing have addressed important strategies and goals for development. Coordinated follow-up and implementation of the recommendations of these conferences will require not only the commitment of Governments, but greater coordination in United Nations operational activities and improved coherence in programmes.

Fully recognizing and supporting the obligation of all Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time, Lithuania also believes in the principle of sovereign equality, that is the equal rights of all Member States. In our case, those rights were violated by the assignment in 1992 of inequitable assessment rates to the Baltic States and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which were above the capacity of those States to pay. We have participated in the work of the high-level working group on the financial situation of the United Nations and have followed the work of the working group on the principle of capacity to pay. We welcome the partial improvement in our rates of assessment due to the 50 per cent phasing out of the scheme of limits for 1995-1997.

Next month the Lithuanian Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations will commemorate this anniversary with an impressive programme. Emphasis is being placed on youth education, the main themes on the agenda of the United Nations and the achievements of the Organization over the past five decades. We must, however, remind ourselves of what the United Nations has not yet achieved. Let us hope that those unattained goals will inspire us to move forward with the same vision and commitment as the founders of the United Nations did 50 years ago.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, His Excellency Mr. Delmer Urbizo Panting.

Mr. Urbizo Panting (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. His experience and proven diplomatic skills will guarantee the success of this important event. I wish also to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for the brilliant way in which he guided the work of the Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

I take this special opportunity also to acknowledge the extraordinary work of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to promote peace, development and understanding among peoples.

In conformity with the premises of the moral revolution led by the President of the Republic, Mr. Carlos Roberto Reina, today's Honduras is making a unique effort: to consolidate a State truly based on law; to fight corruption at all levels; to encourage active participation among all citizens in a framework of national convergence that will define the guidelines for a new country; to emphasize absolute respect for human rights; and, in the context of a dynamic process of modernizing the State, to adopt substantive institutional legal measures and changes, with a view to strengthening our democratic, pluralistic system of government.

Those changes include strengthening the judicial branch; placing the national police under civilian jurisdiction; transforming our compulsory military service into voluntary, educational and humanistic service; allocating 35 per cent of the national budget to health, education and social welfare, which reflects the interest of the State in combating poverty, overcoming social problems and establishing a system of government marked by justice, solidarity and participation; adopting fiscal correction measures to decrease the negative impact of serious long-standing macroeconomic imbalances; beginning the privatization of State-owned enterprises;

undertaking financial reform; and taking the action needed to attract direct foreign investment and encourage joint investment.

Those are some of the most relevant actions taken by the Government of Honduras; they show that, although our democracy was painfully stricken by the Central American crisis of the 1980s, it has had the courage to face up the unique challenges of today and of tomorrow.

Today, Central America is seeking true participation in the new international economic order with an agenda of integration firmly based on the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America. This endeavour is rooted in history, tradition, solidarity and, above all, an awareness of the common destiny of our Central American homeland.

In that connection, we were pleased that last year the General Assembly recognized

> "the importance of implemented, updated and pending programmes, and, in view of the fact that the resources assigned to the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America have been used up, request[ed] the agencies of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, and international institutions to mobilize the necessary resources to set in motion new national and regional programmes in support of the content of the Declaration of Guácimo, the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America concluded at the Managua Summit, and the Tegucigalpa Commitments on Peace and Development adopted at the International Conference on Peace and Development in Central America". (*resolution 49/137, para. 23*)

We were grateful for the adoption of that resolution, and hope that its mandate will be renewed at this session of the General Assembly.

In pursuance of our efforts at integration, my country will host the next summit of Central American Presidents, where the central topic will be the establishment of a regulatory framework for the security of individuals and their belongings, and the signing of a treaty on Central American democratic security.

In our region we can no longer delay the creation of short-term programmes of direct investment, industrial revitalization, transformation of technology and foreign trade, with the necessary support of developed countries. That support can come through the alliance of States friendly to the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America, as was the case initially with the Central America-United States agreement (CONCAUSA).

Central America supports open regionalism; as set out in the plan of action of the Summit for the Americas, we believe that free trade is the most appropriate way to establish the world's most extensive free-trade area.

The Central American Integration System (SICA), which resulted from our own efforts and from important cooperation by the international community, hopes that the General Assembly will grant it the status of permanent observer in accordance with relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. That status would facilitate and broaden cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central American Integration System; I am grateful for the support for the draft resolution that Central American countries have jointly submitted to the Assembly for consideration.

It is my country's tradition always to try to solve its international conflicts by peaceful, diplomatic means. I am therefore pleased to announce that, in compliance with the opinion of the International Court of Justice at The Hague concerning the boundary dispute between Honduras and El Salvador, a binational commission has been established to resolve the humanitarian implications of its implementation; its work is being carried out parallel to that of boundary demarcation. It is the honest wish of the people and the Government of Honduras to conclude these priority tasks without delay.

Nor is Honduras indifferent to the problems of our sister Republics, especially those of Guatemala. We wish to acknowledge the achievements and commitments of the Government of that country and of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) towards peace. We urge them to persist in a peaceful, negotiated quest for a solution to their internal differences.

My country endorses all the principles set out in the Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Development", which recognizes that equitable development removes many of the social and political conditions that result in threats to peace. Most important, it stresses that the human being is the ultimate beneficiary of all efforts towards development and international cooperation.

Clearly, "An Agenda for Development" must encourage the implementation of agreements reached in the economic and social sphere. In that context, my country has decided to endorse the principles and implement the commitments set out in the Declaration adopted by Heads of State or Government at the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen, Denmark, in March this year. We consider that implementation of the Programme of Action is urgent, with a view to establishing a framework for economic growth and sustainable development, and a national and international climate favourable to social development, to the elimination of poverty, to increasing productive employment, to reducing unemployment and to fostering social integration.

Only by attaining these goals can we achieve lasting peace and security, economic progress and the social emancipation of all mankind. We therefore appeal to the international community, and especially to developed countries and international organizations, to fulfil their commitment to transfer significant economic and technological resources to developing countries.

Similarly, the Government of Honduras gives high priority to speedy compliance with commitments and recommendations made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. We note, however, the lack of adequate resources to implement the programmes and projects adopted as part of Agenda 21. We hope that developed countries will meet their commitments, to enable developing countries to meet their own.

Honduras reiterates its commitment to meet the goals of the World Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children. My country is a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and, as part of its national programmes, has adopted policies aimed at attaining the goals set in the Plan of Action. Our Government considers that all boys and girls must enjoy fundamental human rights such as access to education and to health services. One of our priorities is to eliminate family poverty, which is a principal cause of the exploitation of children and infant mortality.

The Government of Honduras also participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing. We are convinced that the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted there will make a further contribution to women's participation in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life and in sustainable development.

The recent conference on review and extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) came at important time in history: when the international community is marking the end of the cold war, an event which eased international tension and strengthened confidence between States. My country reiterates its commitment to the principles and objectives adopted at the review Conference. We remain convinced that the ultimate goal is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the adoption of a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict, effective international control.

The Government of Honduras attaches great importance to preventive diplomacy and to the peaceful settlement of international disputes. We believe it is better to prevent conflicts through early warning machinery and good-offices diplomatic efforts than to use political and military action to try to stop them once they have started. We attach equal importance to the building and maintenance of international peace and security, especially through humanitarian activities that involve the urgent solution of the tragedy of thousands of persons displaced and uprooted from their homes and land. Hence, we reiterate our support for the proposals and recommendations made by the Secretary-General in "An Agenda for Peace" and in the Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace".

The Government of Honduras considers that the strengthening of peace, the fundamental objective of the United Nations, can be achieved only through complete respect for the provisions of the Charter. For peace-keeping operations to be successful, they must be based on the principles of international law: non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, and the non-use of force except in self-defence. Moreover, they should be controlled by the United Nations; peace-keeping operations and their mandates must be clearly defined. They should be funded in a timely way and must above all have the consent of the States involved, which in turn must not raise obstacles and must cooperate fully with these operations.

In the context of the peaceful solution of international conflicts, it is vital to encourage greater cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. International crises can be resolved effectively if we strengthen the various mechanisms and procedures through which such cooperation takes place.

We know that the United Nations continues to face financial problems with a direct impact on peace-keeping operations. Hence, the current machinery for financing must be reformed, taking account of the capacity of States to pay and ensuring that the availability of resources for economic and social development is not endangered.

In January this year, with particular interest and in a constructive spirit, we began participating for the first time in the work of the Security Council. Our participation is shaped by respect for sovereignty and for the principle of the self-determination of peoples, and by our commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights and peace.

Aware of its responsibilities and within its modest means, Honduras has from the outset contributed to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). We have also sent an infantry contingent to help with the humanitarian activities of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). We are determined to continue our participation in such missions in support of peace, security and international humanitarian law.

In the Security Council we have given our full support to the Middle East peace process. We hope that the ongoing negotiations will lead to the establishment of lasting peace in the region.

We are deeply saddened by the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, and in neighbouring countries as well. We condemn the attempts at "ethnic cleansing" and genocide against the civilian population. We therefore hope that recent peace efforts in the region will bear fruit, especially following the agreement reached at Geneva on basic principles for the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Progress in Angola, Liberia and Rwanda makes us optimistic about peacemaking in those countries. United Nations participation has been vital in that progress, and we therefore unreservedly support it. We hope that in the end these countries will achieve the reconciliation that will enable them to begin their tasks of national reconstruction and development.

On 26 June 1945, 50 nations, including my own, with high hopes, signed the Charter of the United Nations at San Francisco. In 1995 we are full of joy at commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of an Organization that has unquestionably served the interests of universality through its gradual expansion. This is also an apt occasion to ponder why all the expectations and dreams of the founders have not yet been met, and to define the mission the United Nations must carry out on the threshold of a new millennium.

To address the question of the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system with greater dynamism and realism, the international community has made unprecedented demands for redefinition of the tasks of the system in the areas of international security and the promotion of the economic and social development of Members.

The end of the century approaches; a new millennium awaits us. We must therefore assess all that has come before; make an in-depth analysis of the weaknesses and strengths, the successes and failures of the Organization; and with realism and fairness set an agenda for the future that will topple injustice, exterminate poverty and throttle warlike tendencies and that will bolster the foundations of a truly unified, humanistic and fair world order.

It is painful to see the weakening of the high expectations created by the collapse of bipolar relations. There have been no substantive changes in the behaviour of highly developed countries towards the less developed areas of the planet. We note with concern a wish to replace the old order with a new, ominous bipolar world: a world of countries that enjoy plenty, and of countries that are enmired in poverty and destitution. We must not permit this fatal design to be carried out. Let us show that we can still imagine and create a different, prosperous world that will include us all.

Let us hope that the new millennium will see the miracle of international coexistence based on peace, brotherhood and universal well-being. Otherwise, there will be no further chance to see the light of hope for a better future; to use the words of the Honduran poet Roberto Sosa, we will live forever in "a world divided for all".

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this meeting.

Two delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that, in accordance with decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply shall be limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Samodra (Indonesia): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to unwarranted references to East Timor made by the Foreign Minister of Portugal in his statement to the General Assembly earlier today. The content of that statement has led us to question Portugal's sincerity and commitment in the ongoing tripartite dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

It is to be recalled that during the fifth round of talks, held in Geneva on 9 January 1995, the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and of Portugal concurred on the need for both parties to exercise continued restraint in the interest of maintaining an atmosphere favourable to further progress. It must be emphasized that Portugal cannot on the one hand laud itself for its efforts to engage in constructive dialogue with Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General and on the other hand continue to use every opportunity to launch campaigns of slander against Indonesia, including misrepresentations of the decolonization process of the Territory and of conditions prevailing in the province.

It is preposterous to speak of "the illegal occupation of East Timor" and "the denial of the exercise of the right of self-determination of the people of East Timor", while the historical facts confirm that the problems in East Timor's history can be attributed to actions of Portugal. In August 1975, Portuguese colonial authorities precipitously abandoned the territory to civil chaos, strife and bloodshed. In fact, they practically instigated the civil war by clandestinely turning over arms and ammunition to one minority group, the Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste (FRETILIN). It would have been timely and appropriate for Portugal to have responded to the rights and primary interests of the East Timorese people at that time in history, to have heard their voices and to have implemented their wishes.

In the face of this, the East Timorese people rightly assumed their inherent right to decolonize themselves, considering themselves no longer bound to any decolonization covenant with the erstwhile colonial Power. This they did by choosing independence through integration with Indonesia in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

We welcome the intra-East-Timorese dialogue, which has served as a forum for the leaders of the East Timorese to meet and contact each other in an atmosphere of peace and fraternity, after having been separated for almost 20 years. However, it should be pointed out that according to the terms of reference for the all-inclusive intra-East-Timorese dialogue, this will not in any way constitute a parallel negotiating track or be a substitute for the ministerial talks held under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

Finally, Indonesia remains fully committed to the people of East Timor, including in terms of the promotion and protection of human rights, and supports them in their efforts towards building a prosperous future for their children and for themselves.

Mr. Catarino (Portugal): I would like to reiterate here that Portugal has no interest in the question of East Timor other than its desire to see a recognition of the fundamental right of the people of East Timor to self-determination. It is our moral and historical duty as the administering State to work towards the achievement of that objective. According to resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, the process of decolonization was interrupted by the illegal invasion and occupation of the Territory by Indonesia. I would like to restate here our trust in the Secretary-General and in his mission of good offices, and our hope that the ongoing talks will lead not only to an improvement of the human rights situation in East Timor but also to the creation of a better atmosphere for the talks and to the ultimate goal of self-determination for the Timorese people.

Mr. Samodra (Indonesia): My delegation would simply like to reiterate that both parties to the dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General should abide by their concurrence on continued restraint in the interests of maintaining the favourable atmosphere very much needed if we are to make further progress. We believe that Portugal's pattern of, on the one hand, claiming that it is committed to dialogue with Indonesia and, on the other hand, continuing to upset the atmosphere by waging a campaign against Indonesia is not helpful.

Mr. Catarino (Portugal): I would just like to recall that the present talks were undertaken on the initiative of Portugal. We are committed to the success of these talks. I reiterate what I have just said. Again, I wanted to say that the Secretary-General has our trust, and that we hope we will achieve progress in these talks.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.8

General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

8th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 27 September 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by Mr. Zhan Videnov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria

The President: The Assembly will first hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mr. Zhan Videnov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, His Excellency Mr. Zhan Videnov, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Videnov (Bulgaria): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your election is a clear recognition of the high esteem your country justly enjoys as an important link between different cultures and continents. This in turn has enabled Portugal to become an active partner of those countries, like Bulgaria, that are progressing towards democracy and a market economy within a united Europe.

In today's world of profound change the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is of significance above all as a vantage point from which to try to develop a vision for the future.

Situated at the historical crossroads of nations and civilizations, Bulgaria today is seeking both to contribute to the successful redefinition of the United Nations role in the world of tomorrow and to ensure its own national security and wellbeing. The role of the United Nations should be above all to build upon the enhanced capacity of the Organization in three crucial spheres of its activities, namely, conflict settlement and peace-keeping, post-conflict peace-building, and the laying of durable foundations for lasting peace.

Today we all recognize the emergence of a great number of new challenges to peace and security marked by extraordinary diversity and complexity. The conflict still raging in the former Yugoslavia has been a traumatic test of the key United Nations responsibility for conflict settlement and peace-keeping. The disappointments in this regard have been many and profound; yet we should all face up to the simple truth that our Organization can be only as effective as a guarantor of peace as we Member countries wish and permit it to be.

Bulgaria has from the outset strictly adhered to policies supporting a peaceful settlement under United Nations auspices. Unilaterally, it has adopted and consistently abided by the principle of non-interference in the conflict. It has chosen not to become involved, either

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directly or indirectly, in any type of military activities on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, including participation in United Nations peace-keeping. We have called upon the other countries in the region to exercise the same restraint. On the other hand, throughout the conflict Bulgaria has supported every international initiative aimed at achieving a peaceful, balanced, just and comprehensive solution.

In keeping with its obligations under the United Nations Charter and as a means of restarting negotiations, Bulgaria has consistently implemented the international sanctions regime. This step was taken on the basis of a national consensus that, despite the heavy burden such sanctions created for Bulgaria, it was our duty to implement them as a dependable member of the international community.

Yet Bulgaria has sustained debilitating losses as a result of the sanctions. Over the past few years, we have repeatedly drawn attention to this problem, both as it concerns Bulgaria and as it concerns cooperation with other affected States. The sanction-induced losses so far amount to well over 25 per cent of Bulgaria's estimated gross domestic product for 1995. This has made Bulgaria by far the country most seriously affected.

Bulgaria's policies favouring a peaceful outcome have helped to establish it as a stabilizing factor in a most deeply troubled region of Europe. At the same time, we feel that such recognition also contributes to enhancing the peace-making potential of the United Nations itself. Positive in raction between the policies of individual Member States and the decisions and measures of the world Organization is the decisive factor in enhancing the latter's key mission, that of helping to settle conflicts and keep the peace.

However, Bulgaria's experience also shows that in order to discharge this mission successfully in the future the United Nations needs carefully to rethink its main peace-keeping instruments, such as economic sanctions and peace-keeping missions.

In areas outside its immediate vicinity Bulgaria has in recent years contributed ground forces and civilian and police observers. In the operation in Cambodia, generally considered a success, several young Bulgarians lost their lives. We sympathize with other countries that have sustained human losses in subsequent missions, including the latest in the former Yugoslavia. We therefore strongly support the view that there is a need to reform and improve the ways in which such missions are planned and executed, with priority given to enhancing the safety of United Nations personnel.

Recently, mediation between parties to a given conflict has been successfully utilized in the discharge of United Nations conflict-settlement missions. In this context, we welcome the agreement reached between neighbouring Greece and the Republic of Macedonia as a most important step towards lessening tensions in the whole of southeastern Europe.

A further major contribution in this regard should be active United Nations support for and collaboration in bringing to a successful conclusion the present intensive efforts to attain peace in Bosnia. Bulgaria welcomes the United States peace initiative and the efforts to implement it in close cooperation with the United Nations and the countries in the Contact Group. This has opened up real possibilities for a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

Experience derived from the Yugoslav crisis highlights the importance of another crucial United Nations function, namely, post-conflict peace-building. Today, it is obvious that although negotiations have not yet achieved a final settlement there is a need to begin to address the problems of post-conflict peace-building without delay.

One set of such problems concerns the reduction of the levels of armaments and armed forces. It is clear that conflict settlement would be pointless were it not accompanied by a set of actions designed to remove the sources of real or potential security threats in the area.

Thus, in the arms-control field Bulgaria shares the view that the establishment of a future harmonized arms-control regime in Europe should combine measures of both a pan-European and a regional character. Such measures should be based on the understanding that security must be indivisible and that any disproportionate concentration of armaments, in particular when coupled with a lack of control mechanisms, undermines security and stability. Therefore, the establishment of a credible system of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures for the territory of the former Yugoslavia, as part of and in line with the pan-European regimes, must be an essential part of a comprehensive post-war settlement. Relevant international bodies such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) should play a very important role in this respect. The main objective should be to attain levels of armaments that will preclude once and for all any temptation to use force.

The second set of peace-building measures concerns post-conflict economic reconstruction and stabilization.

Important work has been done at the United Nations in the past several years for developing an integrated approach to successfully implementing reconstruction programmes. Such an approach should encompass four interrelated aspects: strategic issues of reconstruction, needs and capabilities, post-conflict reconstruction framework and mobilization of resources.

Today plans for reconstruction are being laid for parts of the conflict area in the former Yugoslavia. Bulgaria is particularly well placed to contribute to such plans. This is so for a number of reasons: first, its long-standing relationship with the countries in and around the conflict area and its consistent policies in favour of a balanced and durable political settlement; secondly, because of the experience and know-how of Bulgarian companies with a long record of practical work in the area; thirdly, acquired knowledge and expertise in working with international financial institutions in implementing programmes for reconstruction and development. For all these reasons, Bulgaria could be an important factor contributing to the success of any reconstruction effort in the area.

The emerging pattern of structured coordination between various organizations within and outside the United Nations system provides guidelines and a very useful example to follow. It encourages our own thinking as we start exploring practical and institutional possibilities for contributing to the concerted international efforts in this respect.

At the same time, Bulgaria has every reason to expect also to receive a part of the international post-conflict assistance for the region. Effectively building the peace in the region requires that neighbouring countries that bore the brunt of sanctions and have sustained inordinate losses be included on a priority basis in the list of recipients of international assistance.

Bulgaria's concerns over the subject of sanctions have already become well known. We have formulated them *in extenso* on several occasions. In fact, the international community and, in particular, the General Assembly have recognized the right and the need to include non-target third countries in programmes for reconstruction and development. At its two previous sessions, on Bulgarian initiatives, the General Assembly adopted by consensus two resolutions on this set of issues. This year again, my delegation intends to submit a corresponding draft resolution which I hope will receive universal support.

At this point, I cannot but underline the findings and recommendations contained in the report (A/50/60) of the Secretary-General entitled "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" and, in particular, his conclusion that the price of sanctions implementation should be borne equally by all Member States and not only by those who have had the misfortune of being neighbours or important economic partners of a sanctions target country. I would like to take this opportunity to commend especially the efforts of His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali in this particularly important field of United Nations activities.

It is our view that, as a result of work already done, today there exists a significant scope of agreement on the ways and means for overcoming the specific economic problems confronting the affected States, as reflected in part IV of resolution 47/120 and resolutions 48/210 and 49/21 A of the General Assembly. Bulgaria is participating, and will continue to do so, in an effort to help towards the successful completion of the discussion on these issues in the United Nations.

Together with conflict settlement and post-conflict peace-building, a third, parallel line of action should be undertaken without delay. It should focus on laying durable foundations for lasting peace through economic and social development. The task of achieving durable stability and security regarding peace and economic development has always been of particular relevance in South-Eastern Europe. It has become all the more so in the light of evolving European integration.

In order to boost such development and lasting stability, there is an urgent need for concerted efforts by the international organizations and specialized agencies within the United Nations system, coupled with broader and more intensive cooperation at a regional level. It is doubtless necessary to avoid overlapping and duplication. Yet a mechanism must be put in place for effectively coordinating programmes for early implementation of achievable objectives.

The Ministerial Conference on environment for Europe, which is going to be held in Sofia the last week of this October, is a particularly apt example of this approach. Another initiative along these lines is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

(OSCE) seminar on the role of trans-European infrastructure for stability and cooperation in the Black Sea region, which will also take place in Sofia, a month later. It will be dealing with priority projects for developing regional transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure as factors both for economic growth and for lasting stability and peace in the area.

The above forums could provide valuable inputs for the work undertaken within the European Union with the aim of elaborating a comprehensive regional strategy for South-Eastern Europe. Such a strategy could be based on the approach embodied in the measures accompanying the Pact on Stability in Europe, put forward at the time by the Union. Cooperation at the subregional level may also prove to be a factor of significant practical importance in this context.

For its part, Bulgaria, in the course of the past several months, has attempted to develop thinking and proposals for regional stability, security and cooperation which could interact with initiatives and programmes developed by European and international institutions and major world partners. It is our belief that developing the economic dimensions of regional security will greatly favour the overcoming of local tensions rooted in the past, as well as the full-fledged implementation of the basic principles of relations between States under the Helsinki Act and the Paris Charter.

With a view to promoting such regional cooperation, I would like to state from this lofty rostrum that Bulgaria is ready to host a gathering of interested Central and South-Eastern European States at the governmental level in the course of 1996. Given careful preparation and the support of the international community, such a high-level meeting could become a major step towards lasting security and stability in a historically much-troubled part of Europe.

The parameters of the new international system are still taking shape today. What is positive is that in the days of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations the international community is looking for pragmatic and responsible approaches to lend new meaning to the Organization's mission. The discussion of the possibilities of and prospects for United Nations restructuring can draw on the accumulated wealth of experience and take advantage of the prevailing spirit of cooperation. Let us make the best possible use of them and together venture into the new century stronger, wiser and more united.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria for the statement he has just made and for his personal references to me and my country.

Mr. Zhan Videnov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: The next speaker is the Vice Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Klaus Kinkel, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kinkel (Germany) *(spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation):* Please accept my warm congratulations, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. At the same time, I wish to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Essy, for his successful work.

The United Nations 50 years on — that makes this session of the General Assembly an event of extra-special significance. The people of the world have high expectations. We must take stock, but in so doing we must, above all, look to the future.

The representatives of 50 nations who assembled in San Francisco in the year 1945 were intended to be, as President Truman put it, "the architects of a better world". What has become of their blue-print?

Today the family of nations has 185 members. Millions of people all over the world owe their lives, their freedom and their health, their jobs and their homes, to the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Decolonization has been completed, apartheid has been overcome, and respect for human rights is no longer an internal affair. In the field of disarmament a historic breakthrough has been achieved: in May of this year the proliferation of nuclear weapons was halted. That constitutes a big step towards making the world safe for mankind.

All these are considerable achievements which many critics of the United Nations have overlooked in this jubilee year, achievements on which you, in particular, Mr. Secretary-General, and your staff are to be congratulated. Indeed, the United Nations, in spite of some unjustified criticism, can take pride in what it has done for the cause of peace, freedom and human dignity.

Especially worthy of our gratitude and appreciation are the more than 68,000 United Nations troops currently serving on missions in all regions of the world. When servicemen from Asia, Africa or Latin America attend to the basic needs of refugees in Europe, in the former Yugoslavia, and keep the beleaguered people from starving, then that is, I believe, a marvellous indication that the "one world" is a reality. Lest we forget: nearly 5,000 of those troops, the Blue Helmets, have been killed or wounded in the line of duty. The Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel must be put into effect as soon as possible. This we owe to all those who serve the United Nations.

As we recap the events of the past year, we also have to consider the huge problems now confronting the world Organization. The ability to safeguard peace: that is the world's main criterion when judging the United Nations. And here we have reached a critical point.

Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia: these countries stand for disappointment and setbacks as well. However, I should like to make it very clear that in such cases the culprit is quickly found, too quickly. Nothing is more convenient than to point to the alleged inefficiency of the United Nations. And nothing could be further from the truth.

When it has not been possible to help people, when United Nations troops have been humiliated in the former Yugoslavia, it has in nearly every instance not been the fault of the United Nations. The problems have lain in its unsatisfactory mandate, in the lack of political will on the part of Member States, and, unfortunately, in the shortage of funds. It is we, the Members, who cause the difficulties.

Following the holding of United Nations troops as hostages, the atrocities in Zepa and Srebrenica, and the terrible second bloodbath in Sarajevo's market place, the community of nations has demonstrated that there is a limit to the amount of brutality and contempt for international law it will tolerate. And there has to be a limit.

The resolve of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has paid off — not only for the people of Sarajevo, who for three years have been starving and freezing and kept under constant fire, but also for the peace process.

Yesterday, here in New York, the parties to the conflict had another meeting with the Contact Group, of which Germany is a member. Another step forward was achieved on the constitutional issue following the result achieved in Geneva, and I believe this step to be a decisive one. For the first time since the conflict began there is a realistic prospect of a negotiated peace settlement.

But I should like to warn against being over-euphoric. A lot has still to be done. We shall have to put one stone on top of another stone in order to finish this building. This time none of the participants should leave the conference table until an agreement has been reached — a peaceful agreement at the negotiating table, and not an agreement on the basis of military actions. Anyone who continues to prefer bloodshed, to prefer military actions, will be taking a great responsibility upon himself.

From the beginning, Germany has played an active part in these efforts. We have never taken sides, nor did we ever want to take sides, against one party; rather, we have always taken up the cause of the victims, those who have been tormented and driven from their homes.

To date, the German Government's humanitarian aid in the region amounts to more than 1 billion Deutsche marks. And I should like to stress strongly that we have no double standards, nor should we have double standards. In the short time since August, we have provided more than 6 million marks to help Serbian refugees from Krajina.

My country has contributed in various ways to all peace-keeping operations. By sending medical personnel to Split and deploying Tornado fighters for the first time — fighters which we have made available in Piacenze, Italy — in a United Nations peace-keeping mission, we have also shown that we do not merely talk about taking on more responsibility, but that we act to do so.

We will also meet our responsibility when it comes to implementing the terms of a peace settlement — and I hope that this settlement will come soon. The reconstruction of Bosnia's economy requires a genuinely international cooperative effort, an effort on the part of the international community. The European Union — and Germany, of course, as a member of the European Union — will play its part.

What lessons can and must we learn from what has happened in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia?

First, the United Nations must confine itself to doing what is feasible. Its resources are obviously being strained beyond the limit. It cannot take on every responsibility. It cannot solve all the problems that the world is confronted with.

Secondly, the extent and duration of the commitment of the United Nations must be more precise, the political and military objectives must be clearly defined, and there must be a realistic and, above all, coherent mandate.

Thirdly, if the world Organization is going to intervene, then it must act consistently and resolutely. There must be no repetition of what happened in Rwanda or Zepa or Srebrenica.

Fourthly, cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations such as NATO must from the outset be planned in such a way that maximum speed and, above all, efficiency are assured.

Fifthly, we believe that the regional organizations must play a larger role than they have done so far. Not every problem must go straight to the United Nations. In Europe, for instance, and in other places of the world too, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could assume much greater responsibility. However, we have to enable it to do so.

Still, let there be no illusions. Peace-keeping is not just a fair-weather exercise. Such missions will always be apt to create problems for the world Organization.

And, in view of the hundreds of thousands of lives that have been saved in Somalia and Bosnia, who can argue with an easy conscience that the United Nations should not have intervened? And many of these people have already been forgotten. What is required here is an increased peace-keeping capacity — constructive help, not destructive criticism.

And to those who over and over again have called into question the actions of the United Nations and its peace-keeping operations, I would like to address the following question: Is there an alternative? Who could take the place of the United Nations? Indeed, Europe has not been able to cope with this tragedy in its own house as well as we all hoped it would.

But nor should we forget the European Union's achievements in the former Yugoslavia. It paved the way for the Contact Group's ongoing peace efforts.

To my mind, the conflict in the former Yugoslavia emphasizes how important and right it was for Western Europe to embark on a new course after the Second World War, a course that was directed against nationalism and against the use of force. For four decades, as a result of the East-West conflict, not all European nations were able to follow that route of the European Community, today's European Union.

The European Union is now striving to correct that terrible aberration and bridge the gulfs that separate it from Central and Eastern Europe. The goal is one Europe, a Europe in which the old big-Power politics and hegemonic aspirations can never again take root.

That Europe must have a legitimate place for Russia, but for Ukraine as well. The European house does not consist solely of the European Union: it has many rooms. Neither of these two nations, Russia or Ukraine, should be left outside. To our Russian and Ukrainian partners and friends I say: Europe needs your contribution and it does so also in bringing peace to the former Yugoslavia. Here their new partnership with the European Union and NATO must — and, I add, will — prove its value.

Many feared that when the East-West confrontation disappeared Europe would focus exclusively on its own affairs. That has not been the case. The European Union is intensifying its political, economic and cultural cooperation with the other regions of the world.

In Asia, Africa and Latin America it is already a model for peace, prosperity and regional integration. In the United Nations the European Union is the principal partner for dialogue with the developing countries.

The European Union and Germany have been particularly active in promoting peace and economic recovery in the Middle East. The recent agreement on the West Bank worked out by Yassir Arafat and Shimon Peres is another important milestone on the road to lasting peace in that region. I congratulate both sides on their courage and on their far-sightedness. The United States is playing a major part in this process in this region. We are grateful to them for that. Egypt has rendered an important contribution as an intermediary.

Increasing the peace-keeping capacity of the United Nations also involves reforming the Security Council. There is now a global consensus, I believe, that this is necessary.

The first steps towards reform have already been taken. More changes have been made to the Council's methods of work and more transparency achieved in the past two years than in the whole of the previous four decades.

Like many other Member States, Germany considers that the Council should have more permanent and non-permanent members. The nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America need wider representation and I think we owe it to them. They have deserved it. The same applies to several countries with an important global role.

Germany, with the support of many Member States, has announced its interest in permanent membership of the Security Council. Our willingness to assume greater responsibility, also within this framework, is for us the logical and consistent extension of our commitment to the United Nations. This commitment is consistent with the fundamental principle of our foreign policy, which is to give priority to multilateral cooperation. We have abided by that principle in pursuing European integration, and we believe that that same principle would help us play a useful role in the Security Council.

The world finds itself faced with many new conflicts and challenges. It is crucial that in dealing with them we should focus our efforts more than we have done so far on conflict prevention. A political solution must remain the first option. That requires wider use of human rights observers, improvements in the United Nations early warning system, the promotion of democratization and the observation of election processes, as successfully done recently in Mozambique.

We have provided a list of experienced intermediaries for the tasks of preventive diplomacy. The example of Macedonia shows what the preventive deployment of United Nations Blue Helmets can achieve. I am very happy about the agreement that has been achieved between Greece and Macedonia on this extremely important issue. Preventing fire can save countless lives and in any case it is cheaper than putting fires out. On my recent visit to Rwanda I was deeply shocked, in the truest sense of the word, by the atrocities that have been perpetrated there by human beings on other human beings. If the United Nations had intervened at an early stage and resolutely, many lives could have been saved.

Germany has set up a substantial emergency aid programme for Rwanda. We are trying in particular to do something about the awful prison conditions. I myself visited prisons, in Kigali for example, and I must tell you that I have never seen anything like that in all my life. Urgent remedies are needed here to ensure that one injustice is not followed by another. I travelled to Burundi too, and I returned deeply saddened and concerned. We must not make the same mistakes in Burundi.

Disarmament, arms control and confidence-building — these are some of the main components of conflict prevention. In recent years we have made the kind of progress that no one would have believed possible at the height of the arms race 15 years ago. The task of buttressing this breakthrough and building on the achievements has acquired great political significance.

A few weeks ago we commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the first atomic bomb explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nuclear weapons must never, never, be used again. They must be eliminated completely, as required by article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That aim was reaffirmed by the nuclear Powers at the New York Conference extending the Treaty.

Never has the door to a ban on every kind of nuclear-test explosion been wider open than today. We must now direct all our efforts to the achievement of this goal. The Geneva negotiations must produce such a comprehensive ban by the autumn of 1996 at the latest.

Anti-personnel mines, too, are "weapons of mass destruction". Day in, day out, they are taking a terrible toll on human life, and many of the victims are women and, above all, innocent children. If any kind of weapon must be outlawed, then this one should be.

Eliminating this scourge is a task of the highest priority, particularly in Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Georgia and Cambodia. Germany, together with its European partners, will continue the initiative in this direction during this session of the General Assembly.

At the First Review Conference of the Convention on certain conventional weapons, which opened in Vienna the day before yesterday, tougher export restrictions will have to be agreed on and a strict ban imposed on the use of anti-personnel mines.

I appeal to all Members of the United Nations: In the name of humanity, accede to the Convention on certain conventional weapons as quickly as possible.

There are good reasons why the work of the United Nations began with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations is more than a mere gathering of sovereign States. It is based on the common belief in the dignity and worth of every human being, and it is my view that this must remain the focal point of all political activity.

Universal Children's Day, celebrated a week ago, reminded us of the awful fate to which these, the weakest members of society, are often exposed. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) therefore needs the support of every one of us.

The task of helping those people all over the world who have been persecuted and deprived of their rights must remain at the top of the political agenda. Pressure from the international community, the media, non-governmental organizations and private citizens must be maintained. Those who torture people and who treat human rights with contempt should not be able to sleep peacefully. To this end, the High Commissioner's position will have to be strengthened and the Centre for Human Rights better equipped. People who commit war crimes must know that they will be prosecuted under international criminal law. Hence, Germany strongly urges the establishment of a permanent international court of justice.

But above all, stronger measures to protect minorities are called for. "Ethnic cleansing" is no basis for peaceful coexistence, either in Europe or anywhere else.

More than 27 million people are today on the move. This is one of the most dramatic events of our time. The cause is not only hunger and distress, but, in most cases, unfortunately, ethnic and religious fanaticism. Diversity of culture and tradition is one of the world's greatest assets, and no one should seek to impose a particular model of society on others.

The fact that there exists a core of human rights which everyone has to respect is quite a different matter. This was reaffirmed at the Vienna Conference and should not be challenged by anyone.

Today the dialogue of cultures is central to the quest for peace. I have invited leading representatives of the Islamic world to come to Germany in November to participate in such a dialogue. My feeling is that we have to learn to understand each other better. I have also urged that the Bosnia Contact Group closely coordinate its efforts with the Islamic Contact Group.

In Germany, two and a half million Muslims are living harmoniously with the local community. In my view, it is extremely important that we should develop cooperation and mutual trust at the international level as well, and I am speaking as the German Foreign Minister. Islam cannot be equated with terrorism or fundamentalism. No new enemy stereotypes must be allowed to develop. I think that we should be happy that we have been able to do away with the old ones.

Peace and development are inseparable. Any reform of the United Nations worthy of that name should therefore encompass economic and social matters as well. This fiftieth anniversary is a unique opportunity to create a modern framework for a new development in partnership. Work on the Agenda for Development must therefore be completed as soon as possible.

Apart from improving and simplifying the finance regime for United Nations development activities, the chief concern is to coordinate and efficiently implement the results of the world conferences on the environment, social problems, population growth and women — especially the Conference on Women that has just ended in Beijing.

These are the main interrelated issues of our time as we pursue the goal of peace. The planet Earth must remain habitable for future generations as well. Progress is possible only through equal and fair partnership between North and South. Germany will continue to exert every effort to this end.

None of this can be done unless we can come to grips with the biggest crisis confronting the United Nations: that of its financial situation. There is no reason to deny that it has assumed dramatic proportions; one has to be quite frank about this. This crisis can be overcome only if all contributors, and especially the main ones, meet their obligations punctually. Germany is the third largest contributor to the United Nations, and we pay our bills. We cannot allow a situation to continue where those who pay their contributions on time are also burdened with the arrears of wealthier Members. Unless decisive action is taken very soon, whole areas of activity could grind to a halt.

I very much welcome the confirmation by the American Secretary of State that the United States stands by the obligations arising from its membership. The United Nations needs an America that fulfils its leadership role, just as the United States needs a world Organization capable of, and willing to undertake, reform.

How can we overcome this financial crisis? First, we must restore the balance between the budgets for peace-keeping operations and the regular budget of the United Nations. We cannot allow resources for such operations to be used up to the point of depletion while at the same time funds for urgent programmes of economic or social development are either non-existent or have to be cut back.

Secondly, it is time we found a scale of assessments that reflects Members' actual ability to pay. You, Mr. Secretary-General, have made great efforts to rationalize the Organization's work, to ensure budgetary discipline and to reduce staff. I appeal to all Member States to give Under-Secretary-General Paschke the support he needs for his difficult job.

The United Nations is indispensable to the task of maintaining global order and as a forum and instrument for international cooperation, today no less than in the era after the Second World War. No other organization has the same ability to focus the interests and energies of the world's nations, which we believe is necessary.

The United Nations is not "the others", but us, the Members. And this Organization is only as strong and as united as we, its Members, make it.

Hence my appeal today to the Assembly: let us stop our constant vacillation between euphoria and disappointment regarding the United Nations. Let us stop apportioning blame, which leads nowhere. Let us rather merge vision and pragmatism, solidarity and responsibility for our own actions into a rational and realistic international partnership under the aegis of the United Nations. Let us give this world Organization more clout and make it more efficient and economical. Yes, we will have to slim down the United Nations. It has to save money. Let us do these things in a constructive spirit, together with, and on behalf of, the United Nations. Let us give the United Nations what it needs — including paying our dues.

That is what the world community expects of us now, and rightly so. That is the task facing the family of nations on the threshold of the new millennium. If the reforms fail, there will be only losers.

"Hope is the pillar of the world", they say in South Africa. Fifty years ago, such a pillar of hope for mankind was erected in San Francisco. Let us do everything to ensure that this pillar will continue to support the hopes of mankind in the next 50 years as well. Germany will continue to play its part.

The President: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, His Excellency Mr. Qian Qichen.

Mr. Qian Qichen (China) *(interpretation from Chinese):* Mr. President, please allow me, first of all, to warmly congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that with your remarkable ability and rich experience, you will admirably fulfil this mission. I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to Mr. Amara Essy for the important contribution he has made during his presidency.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to extend my welcome and congratulations to the Republic of Palau, which was admitted into the United Nations after the last session.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations. Over the past 50 years, the United Nations has stood the test of the vicissitudes in the international situation, grown steadily, scored remarkable achievements and made major contributions to the peace and prosperity of mankind. Its membership has increased from 51 at its founding to today's 185. The status and role of the United Nations, the most universal and authoritative intergovernmental organization of sovereign States today, is irreplaceable by any other international organization.

The United Nations has traversed a tortuous and uneven path over the past fifty years, just like the development of anything else. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, it is time to review the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, earnestly summarize the positive and negative experience, and introduce appropriate and necessary reforms so as to revitalize the United Nations and usher it into the new century with a new look to meet the challenge of the times. This is the call of all peoples and a lofty mission of the times.

The United Nations, which was founded in the triumph of the world war against fascism, reflects the ardent desire and determination of the world's people to avert the scourge of war forever, safeguard world peace and security, carry out friendly international cooperation and achieve common development. History has repeatedly proved that adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter will enable the United Nations to play a positive role in safeguarding peace and promoting development, while violation of and departure from the purposes and principles of the Charter will impair the dignity and image of the United Nations and weaken its role. Therefore, to continue to uphold and carry forward the purposes and principles of the Charter is an unshirkable responsibility of all United Nations Members and a basic principle guiding the reform of the United Nations.

The core of the United Nations Charter is the principle of equality between sovereign States and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. All sovereign States, whether they are big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, are equal members of the international community. The internal affairs of a country should be managed by its own people. Major world affairs should be addressed by countries through consultations on the basis of equality and mutual respect. In international relations, to bully the small, oppress the poor, override the weak, impose one's own social system, ideology and values on others or interfere in other countries' internal affairs all run counter to the spirit of the United Nations Charter. Some people are publicly clamouring for "containment" of other countries, which shows that the cold war mentality still refuses to quit the stage of history. But it will ultimately be discarded by history. The post-war period of half a century proves that in handling State-to-State relations, "hot war", "cold war" or "bloc politics" do not work. Strict observance of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence are the only way for States to live in amity with each other and achieve common development.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, thanks to the joint efforts of various quarters, the tendency towards the peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiations has grown and international economic cooperation has gained momentum. However, there still remain many destabilizing and uncertain factors in the international situation. Hegemonism and power politics continue to hold out. Peace and development, the two major tasks of the world today, still face grave challenges.

Armed conflicts and catastrophic wars in some parts of the world remain unabated, which has not only inflicted heavy losses of life and property on the countries and peoples concerned, but also casts a shadow over regional peace and stability and that of the whole world. All this cannot but cause concern and distress among the world's people. As the background and causes behind these conflicts are complicated, to seek a just, fair and appropriate solution to them would call for tremendous and concerted efforts by all the parties concerned, the United Nations and the international community as a whole. We maintain that the parties concerned should, in the fundamental and long-term interests of the people, seek just and fair solutions through negotiations, taking into full account both history and reality as well as the reasonable interests and positions of all sides. Where consensus cannot be reached immediately, the parties concerned should exercise restraint and patience so as to prevent contradictions from intensifying and at the same time try to create conditions and an atmosphere for an eventual peaceful settlement.

United Nations peace-keeping operations in recent years have played a useful role in settling international disputes peacefully. They have both accumulated successful experience and learned lessons from setbacks. We believe that, to ensure a healthy development of United Nations peace-keeping operations and activities in other related fields such as preventive diplomacy, the following guidelines should be established and followed:

Observation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the principle of respect for State sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries;

Settlement of disputes through peaceful means such as good offices, mediation and negotiations instead of resort to frequent mandatory actions. Even humanitarian operations should not resort to military means;

Opposition to double standards and the imposition of the policies and views of one or a few countries on the Security Council. Some countries should not be allowed to carry out military intervention in the name of the United Nations;

For peace-keeping operations, adherence to the principles that have proved effective, such as obtaining prior consent from the parties concerned, observing strict neutrality and the non-use of force except for self-defence;

Adoption of a realistic approach and confining the operation within one's capability. Peace-keeping operations should be launched only when conditions are ripe and should refrain, in whatever circumstances, from becoming a party to a conflict in deviation from the fundamental orientation of such operations.

It has been demonstrated time and again that United Nations peace-keeping operations, if divorced from these guidelines, would, contrary to our wishes, fail to achieve their desired objectives and might even go astray.

Last May, the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted the decision to renew the NPT indefinitely. This serves the interests of all signatories, helps to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and is conducive to the maintenance of world peace and security. China believes that nuclear non-proliferation is only an interim step towards the ultimate goal of the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons. The indefinite extension of the NPT must not be construed as an indefinite license for the nuclear-weapon States to perpetuate their prerogatives.

One year ago, also from this rostrum, on behalf of the Chinese Government I called for the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and put forward a series of complete and interrelated proposals on nuclear disarmament. We are pleased to note that the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty have produced some gratifying progress. China supports the conclusion of such a treaty no later than 1996 and will continue to work with other countries to this end. Once the treaty enters into force, China will stop its nuclear testing.

China's possession of a limited nuclear capability is entirely for self-defence and for deterring the nuclear threat against it. The Chinese Government has from the very beginning unilaterally undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. China's nuclear weapons therefore do not constitute a threat to any country. We strongly urge other nuclear-weapon States to respond positively to China's initiative by immediately starting negotiations aimed at concluding a treaty on mutual non-first-use of nuclear weapons and an agreement on the non-use or non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-free zones.

It has become a trend in today's world that when countries formulate their domestic and foreign policies they accord top priority to the economy and pay close attention to national economic development. The worldwide tendency towards economic integration, regionalization and the formation of economic groupings has accelerated, and competition among States in the economic, trade, scientific and technological fields has further intensified. Under such circumstances, the developing countries are faced with a formidable challenge as they strive for economic growth and higher living standards for their people.

Furthermore, over 1 billion people on this planet remain in abject poverty; this constitutes one of the world community's most acute problems. Given much-needed support to the developing countries as they reactivate their economies and creating a favourable external environment for them are not only important conditions for the shared economic growth and common prosperity of all countries, but also a crucial guarantee for lasting peace and stability throughout the world. Given the present situation, the United Nations should ask itself to pay at least as much attention to development as to peace, effectively perform its duties under the Charter and play a more dynamic role in galvanizing economic growth and development in the developing countries. The reform of the United Nations must result in the strengthening, not the weakening, of its role in the area of development.

True, fairly rapid economic growth in the developing countries must depend primarily on their own efforts. However, it is also important for the international community, and the developed countries in particular, to take practical and effective measures to open markets, provide development funds, transfer technology, increase development aid and reduce the debt burden in favour of the developing countries. International economic cooperation should be guided by the principle of mutual opening-up, equality and mutual benefit. Such practices as implementing protectionist policies of one form or another and attaching political strings to economic assistance to developing countries are obviously misguided.

Profound changes have taken place in China amid the surging tide of change and development across the world. The 17 years that have elapsed since the beginning of reform and opening-up in China have been unprecedented in terms of the economic growth rate and the improvement of the people's living standards. At present, China enjoys political stability, economic prosperity, ethnic harmony and vigorous advances in democracy, legality and community undertakings. China's exchanges and cooperation with the rest of the world have reached a level unprecedented in both scope and depth. Although there may still be many difficulties and challenges along the road ahead, we are confident that, through several generations of hard work, our people will lift China out of economic and cultural backwardness and turn it into a highly prosperous and democratic modern country.

The Chinese people are peace-loving people. China's history for over a century following the Opium War was one of tears, blood and humiliation in which the Chinese nation was subjected to repeated aggression, suppression and plunder at the hands of the big Powers. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. The Chinese people treasure their hard-won independence and freedom and will never commit aggression or intervene against others. China is opposed to hegemonism and power politics of any kind and will never seek hegemony for itself. With a population of 1.2 billion, China will remain a low-income developing country for a very long time and the steady improvement of our people's living standards will remain our objective, towards the attainment of which no effort will be spared. Even when China grows stronger, it will continue firmly to pursue its independent foreign policy of peace and will live in amity with other nations. A stable and prosperous China is a positive factor for peace and development in Asia and the world at large. This is a conclusion that people of vision around the world have come to share.

The Chinese people have waged heroic and unyielding struggles to resist external aggression and oppression and to defend the sovereignty, independence and unity of the country. There is but one China in the world. The Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal Government of China. It is the sole representative of China at the United Nations, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. The peaceful reunification of the two sides of the Taiwan Straits represents the unshakable will and determination of the entire Chinese people, including our compatriots in Taiwan. Proceeding from this reality, the Chinese Government has put forward the correct proposal on peaceful reunification within the framework of the concept of "one country, two systems" and a series of realistic and practicable policies and measures. The past few years have seen a steady expansion and deepening of exchanges and contacts between the two sides in various fields. Any attempt to obstruct peaceful reunification and to split Taiwan from China is doomed to failure. Should anyone try to do so, he would be lifting a stone only to drop it on his own toes.

History moves on. Mankind is progressing. In four years we will usher in a new millennium. The future is full of promise. Let us join hands and make concerted efforts to bring about a better world in which there are peace and cooperation, justice and equality, mutual respect and common development, a world of universal prosperity and continuous progress.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, His Excellency Mr. Hervé de Charette.

Mr. de Charette (France) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I should like to say first how pleased France is to see you personally presiding over the work of the General Assembly. Beyond your personal merits, which I acknowledge with pleasure, your election underscores the important contribution to the activities of the Organization of Portugal, a member of the European Union with which France feels particularly close.

The United Nations is 50 years old. As the Heads of State and Government of the European Union solemnly emphasized in Cannes last June, the collective work since the Second World War has been considerable. The European Council on that occasion paid tribute to the major contribution of the United Nations to this collective work and gave some examples: decolonization, the maintenance of international peace and security, disarmament, development, humanitarian aid and, of course, the protection of human rights.

But the successes of the Organization do not belong solely to history. This year has shown the vitality of the United Nations. In Copenhagen, the social dimension of development, the struggle against exclusion and for productive employment, which are both major challenges for all our societies, are now within the domain of our Organization. In Beijing, the principle of strict equality between men and women and the right of women to decide freely about their lives in all matters have finally been endorsed once and for all as universal values. In New York, the United Nations has begun preparatory work towards the establishment of a world criminal court. This project signals decisive progress for international humanitarian law.

In Vienna, at this very moment, a conference on the scourge of inhumane weapons is being held. France is working in particular to eradicate the scourge of the spread of anti-personnel mines. In 1993, it decided upon a unilateral moratorium on the export of these mines. Now the time has come to go one step farther. Accordingly, I wish to confirm that France has decided to adopt a unilateral moratorium on the production of all categories of anti-personnel mines. It is therefore imposing upon itself a ban on the manufacture of such weapons. France also pledges from this point on to destroy gradually its stock of anti-personnel mines. I call on all Member States to join with us and do the same thing.

This year has also been marked by the success of the New York Review and Extension Conference of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This success was a major step towards disarmament. France proposes that this coming year should be a time for further progress in this domain: disarmament should be our common goal and it should encompass all aspects of disarmament. France calls upon the States that have not yet adhered to this Treaty to do so without further delay. The struggle against the proliferation of nuclear weapons must be universal. I suggest that all the States which have already signed this Treaty multiply concerted efforts to persuade the States which have not yet signed to join them.

In addition, it is important to follow through on the new objectives decided by the review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in May. Among these, the most important is the conclusion, no later than 1996, of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty now being negotiated in Geneva. The President of the French Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac, most solemnly reaffirmed on 13 June 1995 France's determination to achieve this goal and to ensure that the ban is total. France is pleased that other nuclear Powers have in turn made the same commitment. It calls on all nuclear Powers to ensure, together with all the Member States of the Organization, that this pledge is duly confirmed in the text of the future treaty and that the negotiation of the treaty is completed before the autumn of 1996.

I take this opportunity to recall the reasons that led France to complete the programme of nuclear tests that was temporarily suspended in 1992. The final series of tests now under way has no other purpose than to enable us to sign the treaty banning nuclear tests definitively. There were some who imagined and others who wished to make believe that we might reconsider such a decision. This will not happen. Once again I repeat, this is a final test series, limited to what is strictly necessary and held under conditions that have been proved to be harmless. It will enable us to adhere as early as possible to the future treaty banning tests definitively.

The disarmament effort must of course be directed towards reducing existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Substantial progress has been achieved over the past few years with the destruction of a significant number of warheads by the two main Powers. I would recall that France for its part, although it has never contributed to nuclear overarmament, reduced the nuclear warheads it had deployed by 15 per cent between 1991 and 1995.

Disarmament, however, does not apply solely to nuclear weapons. With regard to chemical weapons, I call upon all the Member States to ratify, or for those which have not yet done so to adhere to, the 1992 Convention banning chemical weapons. I regret that France is the only permanent member of the Security Council that has ratified this Convention. I hope that the other permanent members will do so in the coming months.

We must continue the effort to reduce conventional forces in Europe. France took its full part in the agreement on conventional force reductions in Europe. It proposes that the conference which will be held in May 1996 to examine the implementation of this agreement should focus on compliance by all States with a treaty that is the keystone of security in Europe. This conference should also be the occasion for further progress.

There remains the highly sensitive issue of the Convention banning biological weapons. A serious verification system has to be set up. I hope that the working group responsible for this matter in Geneva quickly establishes such a system.

My country cannot accept the argument put forward by some that the Organization has failed in its task. We reject the accusations of passivity and helplessness that are sometimes made against it. Nevertheless, we cannot hide the fact that the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary will not be as joyful and as optimistic as we would have liked. The image of the Organization in public opinion is confused, even negative at times. We should try together and with a clear head to identify the reasons for such a situation. I am convinced they have nothing to do with any disaffection with the Organization.

Never have the aspirations of our peoples, especially the youth of the world, so matched the objectives of the Charter: peace and disarmament, environmental protection, solidarity with the very poor, aid to those who suffer, the promotion of democracy, of liberty and basic human rights, and the collective struggle against the major scourges of the end of the century, namely drugs, terrorism and AIDS. In the last few years, we have witnessed the emergence of a body of common values on a world scale. These are the values which the United Nations, like France, upholds; they are the values of peace.

In Europe we built with our neighbours a Community and then a European Union, and in doing so we turned a page of a history that had so often led us to confrontation with each other. Since 1945 Europe has known a period of unparalleled peace. The European Union is on the verge of being enlarged again. France warmly welcomes the forthcoming membership of its neighbours in Central, Eastern and Mediterranean Europe, and will do everything to make it a great success. In this way, the unity of our continent is gradually being organized.

The extension of the boundaries of the European Union does not lead it to close in on itself. Quite the contrary, Europe is opening up to nearby neighbours from the South, as the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona will demonstrate. I should like to emphasize the fundamental importance of that Conference. Europe also wants to develop its relations with Asia; in this regard, the first Europe-Asia Summit, scheduled for March 1996, will be a clear illustration. Lastly, Europe is deepening its partnership with Russia as well as enhancing its close ties with the United States and other partners.

I would like to insist on the fact that the European Union, under the impetus of the French presidency, has confirmed its privileged relationship with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in the context of the Lomé Convention and its special place in North-South relations as the leading donor of development assistance.

In all those areas, Europe has set the example.

These values of peace are also at work in the Middle East. France welcomes the important results that have already been achieved under the peace process. I am thinking of the Declaration of Principles of 13 September 1993 and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty of 26 October 1994. But, above all, I am pleased to see that the principles agreed upon in Oslo have at last borne fruit with the long-awaited initialling of the interim agreement this Sunday. With this, a major turning-point, manifested by the declaration of principles, has been given concrete form. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process is now irreversible. I also hope that the talks between Israel and Syria will soon resume and that negotiations will start between Israel and Lebanon so that a just and lasting peace, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), be guaranteed throughout the region.

As the French President, Mr. Jacques Chirac, stated at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary at Geneva, the world needs the United Nations. And it knows it, as proved by the increasing number of tasks Member States have entrusted to the Organization.

Therefore, today's doubts have another origin. I see two major causes. First, the United Nations is not shown sufficient respect, probably because of a lack of political will and resources. Secondly, the Organization has yet to demonstrate its ability to reform itself.

Let me speak of respect first. One will never be able lay sufficient stress on the devastating effect of the sight of the Blue Berets of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) held hostage last spring, in chains and humiliated in their dignity as men and soldiers. In Somalia, in Rwanda prior to Operation Turquoise, in the former Yugoslavia since the outbreak of the conflict, the soldiers of peace had already found themselves in situations that the United Nations accepted but that no Member State would ever have tolerated. It is not surprising that the image of the Organization has thereby suffered.

I want to make myself clear. It is not a matter of questioning the enormous work that has been accomplished by the United Nations peace-keeping forces since the end of the cold war: Namibia, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador and Haiti owe to those forces progress that would have been impossible without the United Nations. In Somalia, the United Nations saved thousands of lives. Its intervention in the countries of the former Yugoslavia made it possible to prevent the war from spreading to Macedonia, to contain and dampen the conflict within central Bosnia and Croatia, and, above all, to ensure the survival of the populations in certain safe areas, in Sarajevo in particular, for three years. However, we have been helpless witnesses to unacceptable suffering, to shameful operations of so-called "ethnic cleansing" and to crimes against humanity, which the international community was unable to prevent and before which it remained passive.

These tragic events have shown the dangers of mixing humanitarian and military missions and the risks incurred when the mission conferred by the United Nations is lacking in clarity. The Organization needs to make itself respected when it intervenes in a conflict. Last spring, France proposed to its partners that the time to react had come at last. It suggested a change in attitude and policy, with the formation of a powerfully armed Rapid Reaction Force. We have since begun, in liaison with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), decisive action to lift the siege of Sarajevo. This has enabled the United Nations to recover the respect of all parties.

This strengthening of the United Nations capacities for action has no other objective than to place force at the service of law. Only a political solution can truly settle the conflicts brought about by the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.

That is why France, together with its partners in the European Union and within the Contact Group, has taken a clear position in favour of a settlement based on two main principles, namely, respect for international law and the support of the settlement by all the populations concerned.

Respect for international law entails a rejection of any solution which, imposed by force, would mean breaking with the founding principles of our Organization. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a recognized State and a Member of the United Nations. Its territorial integrity and sovereignty must be preserved. There is nothing to discuss or negotiate on those two matters.

Those who have chosen to break the law and who have committed the crimes of which we are all aware will be held responsible individually. The International Criminal Tribunal, whose creation was proposed by France in 1992, must fully exert its jurisdiction.

It is also important that all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be able to assert their specific character through representative entities. Let each entity have direct management of its own affairs and even be able to maintain special relations with States whose populations share the same affinities. All this is legitimate so long as the management of common interests and the exercise of the functions of sovereignty are not brought into question.

The agreement on the principles of a settlement proposed to the protagonists in this conflict by the Contact Group at Geneva on 8 September of this year and accepted by their representatives, meets these two criteria. This is why France has welcomed it, approves it and will support it. The agreement and subsequent actions represent an encouraging step, but they are only a first step. The extent of what remains to be done to end the tragedy of Bosnia clearly shows the major role that the United Nations will have to take. In that mission, it can rely on France's unwavering support. It must also rely on the support of the international community. Peace will be the work of all.

The decline in the respect shown the Organization is evident in another domain that also affects its survival, namely, its financing. It is not normal for the Secretary-General of the world's largest Organization, faced with the threat of imminent bankruptcy, to have fewer avenues of recourse in dealing with his debtors than the smallest of our businesses. It is not acceptable for Member States — and I am not thinking here only of those that are experiencing real economic difficulties — to show such scant respect for the Organization by ignoring the legal obligations they have freely accepted.

France would like to see the United Nations stronger and more respected. For this to occur, however, it is also essential that the Organization be reformed and adapted.

The Secretary-General has spared no effort to open the way to reform. Under his aegis, significant progress has been made in the management of the Organization. All the debates in these past few years were undertaken at his initiative and have been based on his proposals in the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development. France is awaiting with the greatest interest the Agenda for Democracy, which will complete this triptych in a field in which the United Nations is called on to take the leading role. The Organization has need, more than ever, of its Secretary-General in order to adapt to the demands of the twenty-first century.

However, it also requires the political will of its Member States, and this is not sufficiently in evidence. At the opening of this fiftieth session, my wish is a simple one. Let us concentrate on the projects that have already been begun so that they can be completed soon, within the coming year. France will contribute to this, and I should like in this respect to submit a few proposals.

One of our main objectives will be to reach an agreement on enlarging the Security Council. Enlargement will be successful only if the Council continues in a lasting way to be representative of the community of nations through a reasonable increase in the number of its members.

I should like to reaffirm this today: the Security Council will have to welcome Germany and Japan as permanent members, as well as some major States of the developing world. It would also be desirable, naturally, for the Council simultaneously to be opened to some new non-permanent members.

The negotiation on the enlargement of the Security Council now can and should be concluded quickly. Let us wait no longer. It is equally imperative for the discussion on United Nations financing to produce results in the next few months.

But we must be honest with ourselves. This negotiation depends in part on the response to the United States' request for a reduction in its assessed contribution to the budget for peace-keeping operations. I shall not try to disguise France's genuine doubts as to the legitimacy of this request.

None the less, for the higher interests of the Organization, my country is ready to examine this question without any a priori conclusions. It does, however, set certain imperative conditions. The first condition is that any new scale must respect fully the real capacity of Member States to pay. On this point I should like once again to pay tribute to your country, Mr. President. Portugal decided this year, of its own accord, to increase its contribution to the budget for peace-keeping operations. The second condition is that the agreement must make it possible for the Organization to start off again on sound bases. All existing arrears will therefore have to be paid up. The third condition is that automatic sanctions should be applied to those who do not pay appropriately in order to prevent a recurrence of the current crisis.

This is the modest price of enabling the United Nations to devote itself less nervously to its two principal missions: peace-keeping and development.

Peace-keeping is the domain of the Security Council, the only body empowered to decide on the use of force and to determine the principles and mandate of operations carried out in the interest of international peace and security.

We have to learn the lessons of the experiences of recent years. Aside from traditional peace-keeping, the United Nations may find itself obliged, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council, to resort to force, within the limitations of its means, in order to preserve whatever can be preserved. United Nations military action is often the sole recourse available to the international community.

It is therefore essential to increase the efficiency of the United Nations in the service of peace. Among the most pressing matters, I wish to underline the need to set up capacities for rapid intervention, in the framework of the vital process begun two years ago concerning stand-by forces. I wish also to mention the need to improve the command of operations and the interest in a still greater use of preventive diplomacy.

I would like to say a few words about a situation that is of grave concern to France and that calls specifically for urgent action in preventive diplomacy on a large scale. I am referring to the situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Since the assassination of Burundi's President, Mr. Ndadaye, and the unprecedented tragedy that struck Rwanda, this entire region has been deeply destabilized. More than 2 million Rwandans and Burundis are living outside their country in terrible conditions, with the difficulties that all this entails for the host countries. The absence of lasting political solutions, the climate of insecurity and fear that is kept alive by all the extremists, the suspicion reigning on all sides, the risk of new tragedies — all this compels us to address together and in depth the fundamental problems in this area, taking into account their extreme complexity and the trauma caused by the genocide that has plunged Rwanda into mourning.

France remains convinced that only a comprehensive regional approach that is political in character will make it possible to do this. The principle of a conference on peace, stability and security in the Great Lakes region is now accepted, and we welcome the recent appointment of a Special Representative by the Secretary-General. But time is of the essence.

This conference must be carefully prepared, with the active participation of the States most directly involved and interested in its success, and it must lead to the establishment of a stability pact for the African Great Lakes region. There are three elements that I believe to be essential in this respect: first, the adoption of principles for the return of the refugees and for national reconciliation, along with a commitment by States not to tolerate any activity hostile to their neighbours on their territory; secondly, the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements among the States concerned to enshrine these principles and commitments and to give them substance; and, finally, the organization of a follow-up mechanism under the aegis of the Security Council.

France holds the conviction that development assistance is the second, or perhaps the first, *raison d'être* of the United Nations. Here, too, the balance sheet invites reflection. How can we not have questions about the feebleness of results, the persistence of extreme poverty, or at times even famine, these crises that erase all prospects of development and bring indescribable suffering to populations? How can we not have questions about the reduced contributions of the world's richest countries?

These failures have gone onto the record. Now we must act, reform and take the best advantage of the experience we have acquired. The institutions of the United Nations and their network of representatives in the field are strong points. The development agencies have to refocus their activity specifically on their objectives. They have to set real priorities aimed at addressing real needs — in other words, first and foremost the needs of the least developed countries.

But it would be shocking if, as I sometimes predict will happen, reform were boosted for the sole purpose of reducing still further the contribution of the richest States in the struggle against human poverty.

France, together with its partners in the European Union, hopes to bring about, through An Agenda for Development a mobilization for development on new foundations. The situation is too disturbing to set the interests of the States of the North and South in opposition to each other. We are all bound by a higher duty: the global struggle against poverty.

If, before this session comes to a close, we are able to enlarge the Security Council, to place United Nations financing on solid bases, to give the Organization the means to intervene rapidly and effectively to maintain peace and, finally, to modernize the modalities and institutions for development assistance, we will truly have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, above and beyond all the speech-making, in a fitting manner: by our actions.

Allow me finally to mention a project that is particularly dear to me: to re-establish, on the occasion of this anniversary, the universality of our Organization, which is reflected in the diversity of cultures and languages manifested here.

Linguistic pluralism is essential. It reflects the right of each Member State to understand the others, but also its duty to make itself understood. A draft resolution on this subject will be submitted to the Assembly; it will deal with the use of languages in the Assembly's deliberations and in the Secretariat, and I hope it will enshrine the need to retain sufficient resources to ensure the provisions of translation and interpretation services. I am convinced that we will reach a consensus in this regard.

Our Organization has deliberately taken its actions for the long term. Recent events may obscure achievements that are nevertheless solid, the results of collective, patient, courageous work. But the gains are there. It is up to each of us to make them known and consolidate them so that the United Nations may continue to fulfil the indispensable role entrusted to it 50 years ago.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali.

Mr. Ali (Pakistan): I extend to you, Sir, my delegation's felicitations on your well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We have no doubt that with your experience and wisdom, you will add much to this historic session. We also pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, who presided over the Assembly at its forty-ninth session with great distinction and wisdom.

To His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our Secretary-General, I would like to pay a special tribute for all he has done for peace and the promotion of the United Nations Charter.

To the Republic of Palau, a new Member of our Organization, I would like to say, "Welcome". We look forward to working closely with that country.

We are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our Organization. On this momentous occasion, as the Secretary-General aptly observed in his report (A/49/1), we must resolve to

> "appreciate and strengthen the accomplishments of the past, to recognize and meet the challenges of the present, and to design and implement a plan for the United Nations of the future." *(A/49/1, para. 12)*

We must seize this historic opportunity to forge a global consensus behind development, in all its dimensions, as the lasting foundation for international peace and security and as the greatest hope of humanity.

Pakistan has been strongly committed to the noble vision of the United Nations Charter ever since its independence. We have continuously abided by its principles. We reaffirm our faith in their timeless validity. Pakistan will continue to extend its support and cooperation to the collective efforts of the world for peace.

After exactly 50 years, retrospection evokes mixed feelings. Yet members of our Organization have much to celebrate. The decolonization process, the elimination of apartheid, humanitarian assistance and handling of refugee situations are some of the areas where the United Nations can be proud of its achievements. But much remains to be done.

The end of the cold war provided a historic opportunity to build a new edifice of peace and prosperity: a system in which international relations would be conducted in a spirit of justice, equality and democracy; where poverty would cease to exist, through international cooperation for development; where human rights, especially the right to self-determination, would be promoted and protected; and where aggression would be effectively and collectively challenged wherever and whenever it occurred.

Regrettably, this has not happened. Now, more than ever, it seems that the powerful countries are imposing their will on the United Nations. The decisions and the resolutions adopted by it reflect the interests of a few rather than the good of all. The provisions of collective security are being invoked selectively. Human rights standards are being defended more vociferously in some situations than in others. While in some cases aggression has been forcefully and decisively resisted, in others it has remained unchecked and even rewarded.

Jammu and Kashmir is a case in question, where the Muslim majority continue to be denied their right to self-determination promised to them by Security Council resolutions. These resolutions remain unimplemented. The denial of the right to self-determination led to a massive uprising in the Indian-occupied Kashmir in 1989. Demand for the exercise of this fundamental right was met with a brutal reign of terror unleashed by the Indian occupation forces. It continues unabated and is being pursued with malicious intensity, with devastating consequences for the civilian population of this internationally recognized disputed territory. In Kashmir the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and international morality have been violated with impunity. The massive and widespread human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir have been graphically documented by a large number of international human rights organizations.

Since I stood at this rostrum a year ago, tensions have further escalated in South Asia. One billion people of South Asia are holding their breath as threats of war keep emanating from the leaders in New Delhi.

Jammu and Kashmir continues to burn. The sons and daughters of Kashmir continue to be killed, maimed, executed, tortured and dishonoured. Will the new year of the United Nations bring an end to the rape of Kashmir? Will the beginning of the next half century of the United Nations see the implementation of its resolutions on Kashmir?

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute was not brought to the Security Council by Pakistan. It was India which moved this dispute before the United Nations. The people of Kashmir are looking to this body to deliver them their right to self-determination, as promised to them by this body, by the international community and by India and Pakistan.

Since I stood before the Assembly a year ago, hundreds of Kashmiris have been killed by the Indian forces. Holy places of the Muslims have been razed to the ground by the Indian occupation forces. The holiest of the holy shrines, Charar-e-Sharif, was burned to ashes. The city of Charar-e-Sharif was torched. Is it not ironical that the great Sufi saint, Noor-ud-Din Wali, buried in the shrine there was a man who preached love and tolerance five centuries ago to all humanity, and not just to Muslims? Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Sikhs also seek spiritual solace at his grave. The disdainful act of desecration of this symbol of peace and harmony by the Indian forces has not extinguished the spirit of freedom in Kashmir.

The occupation forces, now numbering more than 600,000, use torture, killings and brutality against the people, against its leaders, and even against innocent journalists. The people of Kashmir were outraged at the killing of a journalist, Mushtaq Ali, in the bomb blast at the BBC office in Srinagar. The whole of Kashmir went into deep mourning at this wanton killing. But India refuses to look truth in the face.

The people of Kashmir and Pakistan are deeply shocked at the killing of the Norwegian tourist by the kidnappers of the Al-Faran Group. We join our Kashmiri brothers in condemning this horrible act against an innocent tourist, and we demand the release of the remaining four tourists. We have extended every possible cooperation to countries whose citizens' lives are still in danger, but we have a right to ask: Who are Al-Faran? Nobody seems to have heard of this group ever before. There is too much circumstantial evidence which points an accusing finger at New Delhi. We do not want rhetoric; we do not want to score points. We want the safety and the freedom of these innocent tourists. Pakistan calls for an independent and impartial inquiry into the hostage-taking by Al-Faran, under the auspices of the United Nations, so that those responsible for this act can be brought to justice.

India continues to harp on the issue of elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Let it ask the All Parties Hurriyet Conference, the representative party of all Kashmiri organizations in Jammu and Kashmir and the sole voice of the Kashmiri people, whether they want elections, or a plebiscite and the implementation of the Security Council resolutions.

Kashmir is an international dispute. India cannot internalize it behind the garb of bilateralism. If this "non-principle" was allowed to prevail as the basis for the settlement of disputes, then there would be no international morality left. There would be no international order, and the world community could say farewell to peace. It would become the law of the jungle.

In the meantime, along the Line of Control in Kashmir our people are being killed daily and injured by cross-border firing and rocketing. Access to over 80,000 of our people in the Neelam Valley has been cut off by daily Indian firing.

India claims that Pakistani militants cross into Kashmir. In good faith and in order to ascertain the veracity of the Indian allegations, I wrote to the President of the Security Council last year asking for the expansion of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) on both sides of the Line of Control. India's response to this constructive proposal was a firm "No". Instead, it deployed 800 troops per kilometre and built three Security Zones along the Line of Control. I ask: Can there be cross-border violations after such heavy fortifications? By what logic can they reject our proposal for increasing United Nations observers? The answer is obvious. They want merely to score points in international forums. They want to build an argument against Pakistan. They want to convince the world that it is not the Kashmiri people who are alienated from India, but Pakistan that is turning a blind eye to militants crossing the Line of Control from our side.

I ask you to ponder this Indian posture. In history this has always been the language of the aggressor, of those who want to maintain the status quo. I cannot believe that Indian authorities are so naive as to believe that the Kashmiri uprising is foreign- inspired. Other Powers have also made such mistakes in the past, much to their dismay and ultimate discomfiture. India must learn from history. The march of history has never been, and never will be, altered by a systematic falsification of facts or a string of blatant lies. The people of Kashmir have rejected the Indian occupation. No amount of repression, no amount of killings, gang-rapes, torture or mining of villages will deter the people of Jammu and Kashmir from winning their right to self-determination.

This truth is being lost on New Delhi. For our part, we are prepared for dialogue. We are prepared for mediation by the Secretary-General or by the President of the Assembly, or by any peace-loving country under any modality, under any arrangement.

We are prepared for peace. We want conflict resolution. We want talks but the talks must be on the substantive issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Talks must aim at achieving settlement. Talks must be on the basis of a structured agenda. Once the issue of Jammu and Kashmir is resolved, it will open the door for a solution to all other Indo-Pakistan disputes. But our offers of talks have fallen on deaf ears. India now hides behind a new subterfuge that talks should be unconditional, that talks must be without an agenda. We cannot accept this because during the last 23 years under the Simla Agreement, the two Foreign Secretaries met seven times without any result. Every time a meeting takes place the Indian side states that Kashmir is an integral part of India and not an international dispute. This is a negation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions. This is a negation of the Simla Agreement, and I quote article 6 of the Simla Agreement, which states,

> "Both Governments agree ... to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and of normalization of relations",

including

> "a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir".

The Simla Agreement is fully within the framework of the United Nations Charter.

Then we are told that the Security Council resolutions are outdated. What will the world look like if countries were allowed unilaterally to reject United Nations resolutions, and if this deviationist stance were to become a universal principle of international morality? Can morality become outdated? Can evil become good with time?

Instead, India has gone on to a feverish arms race. When they exploded their nuclear bomb in 1974, we told them not to push South Asia into a nuclear arms race. But our warnings were not heeded and now, along with its massive blue-water navy, which threatens the shores of Africa and Asia, they have launched into an arms race in South Asia. Their Prithvi missiles are Pakistan-specific. The Prithvi missile is a tension multiplier: it gives Pakistan only three minutes' response time.

What are they arming themselves for? Who threatens them in Asia? Their leaders talk of extending the Indian military and naval might to the shores of the Indian Ocean. In this day and age this approach is downright anachronistic.

During the Eighth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which was held in New Delhi in May this year, President Leghari urged Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and the Indian leadership not to take this fateful step. He urged the Indian leadership to come to the table and solve the core Kashmir dispute. He also warned that if India continued with this feverish race for arms, and now for missiles, then Pakistan would have no choice but to rethink its options within the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Having fought three wars to defend its territory, the people of Pakistan feel threatened. That is why peace is important. That is why peace is vital for Pakistan. But I want to make it absolutely clear — and let there be no doubt about it in anyone's mind — that the people of Pakistan have the will to survive, and survive they will with dignity and honour.

One fifth of humanity, a billion people, live in the seven countries of South Asia. The world is passing us by. Our people are trapped in poverty, in hunger, in disease and unemployment. Don't our people deserve better? Don't they deserve a chance? Don't six countries have a right to live in peace in South Asia? It is our earnest hope that those in New Delhi who threaten war should look at the state of poverty of their own people. We hope that they have the political will to ensure the peaceful settlement of disputes, and there will be many peace dividends if peace comes to South Asia.

Peace will be worth their while. Trade will flourish, mega- projects in the Gulf, from Iran and from Central Asia will bring prosperity to our peoples. I hope that better counsel will prevail in New Delhi and I hope there are still men of peace and vision left in India who will not be the prisoners of the acrimonies of history but will look to the future of a billion people.

The Secretary-General, in his 1995 report on the work of the Organization (A/50/1), has recognized the aggravation of relations between India and Pakistan as a result of increasing incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir. We would like, in particular, to facilitate the search for a lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute. We hope that India will also accept the United Nations Secretary-General's offer of good offices, as Pakistan has done. We also sincerely hope that the United Nations General Assembly will use its authority to exert pressure on India to stop immediately the brutal violations of human rights and to implement the Security Council resolutions which ask for the holding of a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir.

What has been happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the past few years is a monumental tragedy. The world has witnessed a Member State of the United Nations being made victim of brutal aggression and its people subjected to atrocities, massive violations of human rights, ethnic cleansing and the abhorrent practice of genocide — acts which would put the horrors of the Second World War to shame. The killing fields of Srebrenica and Zepa are sadly reminiscent of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Yet the international response has been totally inadequate and has often come too late. The Bosnian Muslims were left to defend themselves against a vastly superior military machine, their hands tied by an unjustified arms embargo.

Pakistan strongly reiterates its firm support for the demand by the Bosnian people for the lifting of the arms embargo. For its part, Pakistan remains strongly committed to offering every possible assistance to the people and Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We must seek credible international guarantees for the preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

If one step is taken towards peace, the world of Islam is prepared to take two steps more. We have taken note of the action taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and of the establishment of the rapid reaction force. We urge the NATO countries not to relent on the air strikes until the Serbian aggressors and delinquents are made to pay a price for their deeds and to act like civilized people. Unless peace is fully restored and a just and equitable settlement is in place, the OIC will reserve its right to challenge the illegal United Nations arms embargo on the Bosnian people.

We fully support the Croatian efforts to recover Krajina and their other territories from Serbian military occupation. We demand that in the settlement Srebrenica and Zepa be restored to their original United Nations-designated safe-area status. We also demand that Kosovo and Sanjak be protected from Serbian "ethnic cleansing". The Declaration of Principles signed recently in Geneva is something we consider well-begun but only half-done. There are many pitfalls, and we see many dangers in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. A lot more vision and courage on the part of the world community will be required if the entire peace plan is to be fully implemented. We hope that the United Nations, the European Union and NATO will demonstrate the courage required to resolve the crisis in the Balkans.

The situation in Afghanistan makes us very sad. The people of Afghanistan wait in anguish for peace to return to their tortured land. There appears to be no end to the fighting between the various groups. One and a half million Afghans are still in my country. They too, like us, look to the United Nations and to the OIC to bring peace to their land.

I should like to state here unequivocally, and with all the responsibility at our command, that in no way have we interfered in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. We would also urge that no other country do so. We would urge other States not to increase the suffering of the Afghan people by supporting one group or the other. We should all support United Nations Special Representative Mahmoud Mestiri's mission to bring peace to Afghanistan, a peace based on accommodation for all factions and all groups. This peace can be achieved only through mutual accommodation and national reconciliation. In the last 18 months, our Mission has twice been subjected to mob attacks. In the second one, 26 of our officials were injured, including Ambassador Qazi Humayun, and one staffer was killed. This is most unfortunate. We hope that the sanctity of the Mission will be respected and that the Vienna Conventions will be honoured.

For over a decade, Pakistan supported the legitimate struggle of our Afghan brothers against foreign intervention. Once this intervention was ended, Pakistan promoted accords among the Afghan parties and factions for a peaceful transition from war to peace. It was as a consequence of the compromise achieved in the Islamabad accord of May 1992 that President Rabbani took office. His Government was to be a transitional one and was to prepare for a broad-based and popular government representing all regions and political forces in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, as the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Mestiri, has clearly stated, the regime in Kabul did not allow the promised transition to a representative government to take place.

In large measure because of this refusal to live up to solemn agreements, fighting in Afghanistan has been endemic during the past few years. The fortunes of war recently turned against President Rabbani's regime because it became increasingly unpopular with the Afghan people. A regime in Kabul whose de facto legitimacy we have not questioned, a regime in Kabul that today controls only 5 of about 32 provinces in Afghanistan: this regime has tested our patience again and again.

This regime chooses to punish unarmed and innocent staffers and the Ambassador. It chooses to burn down our Embassy and its premises. But this has not made Pakistanis angry at the Afghan nation. It has merely made us sad, because this regime has forgotten the 14 years of the support given and the sacrifices made by the people of Pakistan for their freedom. Instead, it chooses to please those who destroyed their country, who killed and maimed millions of Afghan men, women and children, who destroyed houses, who destroyed people's lives, who planted millions of land-mines across the country — a large number of which have yet to be removed. By these wanton acts, which go against the Vienna Conventions, the Kabul regime wants to win the favour of those who seek to fish in the troubled waters of Afghanistan.

The Kabul regime seeks to survive with the help of military support from the enemies of the Afghan nation, while it rules through a minority. It seeks to conquer Afghanistan through military force. This is against history. This will not happen. The regime is forgetting the code of honour of the Afghan nation. While we in Pakistan are sad at what has happened to our countrymen in Kabul, the chivalrous Afghan people are angered and incensed. We take no responsibility for what the Afghan people will do to vindicate their honour. They know that there never was, and never will be, interference from Pakistan. The world knows that a faltering regime always wants to lay its follies and its internal defeats at the doorsteps of others, and for this the Afghan nation will demand, and get, retribution.

However, this provocation will not deter us from our steadfast path of neutrality towards the Afghan people and the unity of Afghanistan or from non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs or our abiding friendship and brotherhood with the Afghan nation. In the meantime, we would like to assure the people of Afghanistan that we shall stand by them in their hour of trial. We shall not abandon them.

Pakistan was closely associated with the third round of United Nations-sponsored inter-Tajik talks. While I pay tribute to the United Nations Special Representative, Ambassador Píriz-Ballón, for his statesmanship, which led to the main elements for peace in Tajikistan, let me add that our role too was to bring about national reconciliation in that country. We shall continue to cooperate with the United Nations to bring about complete peace in our friendly neighbour Tajikistan.

Mr. Kulla (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The events in Azerbaijan, too, are a matter of deep concern to us. We fully support the efforts of President Gaider Aliyev for an equitable settlement of the Nagorny-Karabakh dispute; a settlement which is based on the removal of aggression against Azerbaijan.

We fully support the Middle East peace process. We hope that the Palestine Liberation Organization-Israeli accord is implemented in letter and spirit without any recourse to delay by Israel. We have supported the Jordan-Israeli peace accord and favour a negotiated settlement of related issues, especially the Golan Heights, southern Lebanon and Jerusalem.

Pakistan continues to be deeply concerned over the situation in Somalia. The United Nations, along with the Organization of African Unity, the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Conference must endeavour to promote an early political solution in that country and its eventual reconstruction.

In other areas which impinge on the peace and stability of the world can be seen the lack of progress in the field of disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the field of nuclear weapons.

The end of the bipolar world based on hostile camps has removed the impediments to pursuing the goal of nuclear disarmament. Yet the goal remains elusive. It is incomprehensible why commitments cannot be translated into reality. The agreements reached on the reduction of strategic arms still fall far short of the expectations raised by the end of the cold war. The world should resolve to remove the scourge of nuclear weapons from the face of this earth.

Until nuclear disarmament is realized, the nuclear-weapon States should give unconditional security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States. In this context, the Conference on Disarmament should establish an ad hoc committee right at the beginning of 1996 to negotiate a legally binding convention on security assurances. The Conference on Disarmament should also continue its work on a comprehensive test-ban treaty for its early conclusion.

Parallel to all these global efforts, regional avenues should be promoted for nuclear non-proliferation. The concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones is finally being translated into reality in different parts of the world. Unfortunately, the proposal Pakistan made 20 years ago to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia has not even taken off because of the negative attitude of certain States in the region. Nevertheless, Pakistan has continued to advocate efforts to eliminate the dangers of proliferation from South Asia. To that end, we have made several suggestions. Regrettably, they have not evoked a positive response from India.

Pakistan has also proposed conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will deliberate upon this approach and evolve guidelines to bring at par the weaponry and forces of the regional States.

In our view, the emerging role of the United Nations as a peace maker and a peace-keeper would greatly help in achieving peace and harmony at the regional as well as the global levels. We believe that preventive diplomacy is the cornerstone of United Nations peace efforts. Pakistan has been actively cooperating and participating in a major way in United Nations peace-keeping efforts. It is a matter of immense satisfaction that today Pakistan is the third largest troop-contributing country to United Nations peace-keeping operations.

Pakistan believes that certain operational realities must be justified for the success of such operations. We need a clear commitment from the international community, accompanied by a clear political direction and a unified command structure.

In order to ensure better and effective implementation of Security Council resolutions, there is a need for thorough consultations between the members of the Council, as well as actual troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, at all stages of any peace-keeping operation.

As we enter the new millennium, our collective objective should be to maximize economic growth leading towards the ultimate objective of human development. To promote peace and prosperity, it is essential to facilitate rather than restrain the application of modern technology for economic and social development.

Adequate official resources should be channelled to those developing countries which are implementing far-reaching economic reforms and liberalization measures. A net flow of official assistance should be directed in particular towards the eradication of poverty, human and social development programmes and sustainable growth in the developing countries. This is particularly true of Africa, a continent which has been largely bypassed by the economics of the twentieth century. For our part, Pakistan extends full support to the United Nations development assistance plans for Africa and for the Sahel.

Pakistan is encouraged by the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, despite the partial and unequal response to the trade interests of the developing countries. The global economy is finally coming out of recession. New growth is likely to be generated mostly in the developing countries, whose integration into the world's financial and trading system can immensely contribute towards global output. There is, therefore, a unique opportunity to create a just, fair, equitable and non-discriminatory global economy.

Free markets and open economies do not imply a disregard for the plight of the poor and the disadvantaged. This principle must be applied as much among nations as within nations. The aim must be to improve living conditions for all within a dynamic economic framework. Pakistan welcomes the constructive outcome of the recently held Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

We in Pakistan are particularly aware of the need to address the problems of the deprived segments of our society. Development initiatives, such as the Social Action Programme, are being formulated within the constitutional framework. Our Constitution contains a number of articles related to social integration with particular reference to women and children and religious and ethnic minorities, as well as those living in poverty. Special efforts are being made to ensure the full participation of women in nation building. Pakistan's approach to employment and poverty eradication combines policies for national growth, employment and price stabilization with programmes that target the poor and the vulnerable.

Pakistan would like to reiterate the importance it has always attached to the reform of the United Nations. Pakistan supports the reaffirmation made by the Non-Aligned Movement that both the reform and expansion aspects of the Security Council should take into account the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution, as well as the need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. Pakistan remains strongly opposed to centres of privilege within the United Nations system. These are anachronistic, anti-democratic and contrary to the principle of sovereign equality.

In conclusion, the challenges that Member States of the United Nations confront are indeed forbidding. Yet the opportunities for genuine peace and universal prosperity are most promising. With good will and cooperation, all Member States can make significant progress at this historic session towards the vision of peace, progress and human solidarity envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. This is an extraordinary moment of opportunity. The decisions we take today will determine whether the new era will be one of hope and prosperity or one of despair and deprivation. The choices to build a peaceful world are therefore entirely in our own hands.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, His Excellency Mr. Guido di Tella.

Mr. Di Tella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Our presence here at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly holds a very special meaning. On this occasion, we are not gathered here simply to reenact the annual ritual of exchanging views and official national positions on the principal problems that encumber the international agenda. These first 50 years during which the Organization has carried out its noble task have been marked by successes and disappointments.

As President Menem said in this very forum a year ago, the real situation in the world today offers a balance of light and shadow in which encouraging signs of convergence exist alongside other signs that seem to point to the persistence of injustice and disagreement. The search for a delicate balance of peace and security with development and social justice is the goal which we must constantly pursue. This search must be translated into concrete facts which demonstrate on this anniversary, through the actions of each and every Member State, the extent to which we have faithfully respected the spirit and the letter of the Charter.

At this historic moment, my country has chosen actively to involve itself in the resolution of serious international crises through the concerted action of the United Nations.

The tragic situation in the Balkans has found Argentina present in solidarity, through its troops, in search of a space for dialogue and understanding after five years of blood and fire. Today we are witnessing the rebirth of hope, starting with the recent Geneva agreements and those that were signed yesterday. We hope that the peoples of the new republics of the Balkans can, once and for all, begin life again in peace after such enormous suffering, so much violence and so many unnecessary deaths.

The Middle East has suffered the attacks of extremism; yet the peace process initiated in 1993 forges ahead. On behalf of the people and the Government of Argentina, I pay a tribute to the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian people, who, despite provocations and the legitimate grievances of those who suffer, have managed to fix their eyes on the future and continue the task of concluding agreements on each of the points that comprise the complex agenda for peace in the Middle East.

We cannot forget our African brothers and sisters, who have been affected by situations in which political struggles and the survival of the least fortunate are combined in a most dramatic fashion. It is precisely in those situations that we must reaffirm our contribution and our solidarity, because we cannot remain indifferent to the suffering and deprivation of so many human beings without neglecting the commitments dictated to us by the Charter and imposed upon us by human solidarity. To the extent of our ability, we maintain our participation in the solution of such problems as those of Western Sahara, Mozambique and Angola, a neighbour country of ours in the South Atlantic with which we will cooperate actively in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

The case of Haiti warrants my particular consideration, since it deals with an issue that directly affects our region of Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, I would like to express the Argentine Government's great pleasure at the successful process that culminated in the adoption of Security Council resolution 940 (1994). Only through that resolution could the Government legitimately elected by the Haitian people be reestablished — a Government which, with moving endurance and commitment, is restoring institutional normalcy and again moving ahead on the road to economic development.

Argentina is proud of its character as a Latin American nation. In just a few days, we will have the high honour of hosting the Fifth Ibero-American Summit, at which all the nations of our region, together with their respective mother countries, all linked by a common history and culture, will set an inspiring example of dialogue and cooperation in the search for solutions adapted to our present reality. It is precisely this reality and the prospects we envisage for it that make us look with optimism to a Latin American future based on democracy, peace and integration.

The Argentine commitment to peace was recently demonstrated once again through the active exercise of the role mandated to us, together with Brazil, Chile and the United States of America, as guarantors of the 1942

Rio Protocol, in an effort to bring the peoples of Ecuador and Peru together once and for all.

The President returned to the Chair.

Building upon political and economic stability, ambitious mechanisms for integration have been designed that contribute to consolidating the opening of our economies, the transparency of our markets, and the growth of commercial exchange with other regions — in short, the creation of the conditions necessary to secure a better future for our peoples.

In our case, we have made the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur) a priority in our foreign policy, with the understanding not only that its strengthening will boost our economy and those of its member countries, but also, and most especially, that it is thanks to this open approach that the men and women of our country and our region can come together today in an atmosphere of economic growth after so many years of disillusionment and frustration.

In Argentina, we place special emphasis on the following principles: good governance; the struggle against corruption; discipline in fiscal matters; accountability in the management of public finances; respect for human rights; legal equality for foreign investments; and full authority for institutions within the rule of law. These are the principles that form the framework designed to give a greater boost to economic activity as a necessary motor for the well-being of the Argentina people.

This framework of recovery and harmony within Latin America, however, raises important issues which remain unresolved.

In the South Atlantic, the dispute concerning sovereignty over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime spaces has not yet been resolved. We will not cite yet again the numerous resolutions in which the General Assembly and the decolonization Committee have categorically and repeatedly stated their position on this matter. Let me simply recall that all of these include a clear and direct appeal to the two countries involved — Argentina and the United Kingdom — to reach a negotiated settlement of this dispute. This appeal from the Assembly remains unheeded, despite the willingness we have constantly shown and the excellent relations that bind our two countries. This makes the issue even more baffling.

In spite of this, we maintain a cooperative effort with regard to the exploitation of fishing resources in the area in an attempt to protect the biomass and at the same time ensure that significant economic activity continues.

With regard to oil, given the non-renewable character of the resources and the existence of a consolidated international doctrine which proscribes the unilateral exploitation of disputed resources, we are reaching a temporary understanding that allows us to engage in further exploration and exploitation while avoiding the creation of new sources of tension which might discourage initiatives from the private sector.

This very morning we and the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Malcolm Rifkind, signed a joint declaration which will allow us to move forward together in this spirit.

With respect to the inhabitants of the islands, I repeat our determination to guarantee total respect for their way of life, their culture, habits and institutions.

The dispute over the Malvinas Islands will not disappear as if by magic. The peaceful recovery of the exercise of full sovereignty over all the territories in dispute and the surrounding waters, and respect for the way of life of the islands' inhabitants, are today part of Argentina's Constitution, on which there was consensus across the entire political spectrum of my country. Only rational dialogue, without any a priori conditions from either party, will permit us to make progress towards the final implementation of the resolutions of the Assembly and of the Decolonization Committee.

At the end of this year Argentina will conclude its term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. In our two years as a member we have witnessed numerous situations that have required an immediate response on the part of the Council. Responding to these situations has not been an easy task, and at times the serious problems that have given rise to them have failed to receive full attention. Nevertheless, the Council's response has confirmed on each occasion its character as the central and indispensable instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Our commitment to the work of the Council has not been limited to its discussions; it has extended to Argentina's contribution to peace-keeping operations, the largest in our region. Our presence in the former

Yugoslavia, in Cyprus, Mozambique, Haiti and Kuwait — to name but a few operations — is tangible proof of our concrete, and not just rhetorical, contribution to international peace and cooperation.

In recent days much has been said about the process of reform of the Security Council. If anything has been proved by the extended deliberations of the ad hoc Open-ended Working Group established for this purpose, it is the extreme difficulty of finding a formula, acceptable to everyone, that does not introduce imbalances into the region.

In our delegation's view, the fundamental task in this respect is to protect and improve the efficiency and expeditiousness of the Council. In order to achieve this, a careful, limited increase in the membership would be in order, should there be the necessary consensus. This increase could be supplemented with a new procedure aimed at achieving a greater representativeness, which, by means of rotation mechanisms, would enable several of the most interested countries of different regions, as well as those which stand to wait many years before joining the Council, to take part more regularly in its deliberations.

We believe that those countries which are legitimately interested in taking part in the daily construction of a stable and peaceful world order could fulfil their aspirations in this way.

Moreover, further changes in the procedure of the Council should be introduced in order to increase its transparency and strengthen the process of dialogue and exchange of information. Over the past two years we have actively promoted such progress, being convinced that the contribution of the international community to the solution of its crises would be facilitated if all its members had more criteria and information on which to base their decisions.

This matter is of undeniable importance, since the Security Council is the body ultimately entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. This requires that we proceed with the utmost care, searching relentlessly for consensus.

This year has been marked by the positive contribution to international peace made here in New York, when the 179 States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), decided to extend it unconditionally and indefinitely. We are concerned about the ongoing nuclear-test programmes. Therefore, we look forward to the prompt conclusion of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, without exceptions or permissible thresholds. Likewise, we hope that the Conference on Disarmament will address without delay the negotiation of a convention banning the production of fissionable material.

It is encouraging to note the increased awareness of what the Secretary-General has rightly called the "international humanitarian crisis" of anti-personnel mines. We trust that the 1981 Convention on inhumane weapons will be strengthened as a result of the meeting to be held in Vienna in the next few days.For our part, in addition to supporting the Assembly resolutions on the subject, we have declared a unilateral moratorium on mine production, and with regard to a case which affects us directly — the mines planted by our armed forces on the Malvinas Islands in 1982 — we have offered our cooperation and financial help to the United Kingdom for their removal, which is proceeding with the greatly appreciated cooperation of the United States.

Apart from the struggle for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, new challenges to peace and stability, including international terrorism, have emerged. Today no one can feel safe from the action of groups which are international in structure and very often rely on the active or passive support of certain States. Almost every day gruesome attacks reflect the reality of this new threat, which calls for a determined and unequivocal response by the international community.

We have drawn this issue to the attention of the Security Council, and we are confident that as a result urgent action at the national, regional and international levels will be taken to promote legislative harmonization and cooperation in the judicial, police and even intelligence spheres, in order to halt this insidious manifestation of terror.

However, the pressing challenges requiring international action are not restricted to the domain of security. Emergency assistance activities and the subsequent stage of rehabilitation for development constitute a priority task for the United Nations. For this reason, in 1994 we proposed the "White Helmets" initiative, which aims to deliver assistance in cases of extreme urgency and to mobilize resources for specific instances of extreme poverty. We are pleased to note that the initiative was adopted by consensus in resolution 49/139 B, with the formidable support of 67 co-sponsors. In the future we will further define details of the initiative, which has already been implemented in very successful pilot projects in our region. We hope to extend this initiative to other parts of the world where even greater need is experienced.

From a historical perspective, 50 years may not be many, but they are not insignificant in the life of an international organization that every day has to address numerous and complex issues. Today we find the United Nations committed to the solution of international crises which affect international peace and security, a far cry from the marginalization of the Organization during the cold war. The United Nations is actively involved in advances on great social issues by means of international conferences such as those of Vienna, on human rights; Cairo, on population; Copenhagen, on social matters; and Beijing, on women.

These meetings reflect the new and vigorous stage reached by multilateralism, which elicits universally accepted responses to the great currents of sustainable human development, and acts in strict conformity with the provisions of the Charter, under which the promotion of human welfare, development and dignity are harmonious and mutually complementary priorities. We remain actively committed to work to achieve these priorities in the framework of the United Nations, thus renewing the commitment of 1945, towards which the current reform process will make a substantive contribution, with the same faith we had then, nourished by decades of cooperation.

The year 1995 is not only the year that marks the half century of the United Nations. Two years ago the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/126, declared 1995 the United Nations Year for Tolerance. It occurs to me that the forefathers of the United Nations must have had the idea of tolerance deeply etched in their minds when they set the foundations of this unique endeavour.

International reality reminds us how often we forget tolerance, how often we reject, proscribe or ignore others for what they are, think, say or do, or simply for existing. May this anniversary be a timely occasion to remember the need to reaffirm in our minds, in the education of our children and in our acts, tolerance, and, with it, the culture of peace.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.